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What are the antecedents and outcomes of strong global sports team brands? A Polish fan perspective

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What are the antecedents and outcomes of strong global sports team brands? A Polish fan perspective

By

Magdalena Trzcińska

January 2017

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

What are the distinguishing features of global sports teams from their fans' perspective? What are the underlying mechanisms controlling the power of their brands? How do global sports fans demonstrate their support towards their favourite global teams? What are the outcomes of having a strong brand for a sports team? These are the key questions this research answers. The main purpose of this study is to outline the features of sports team brands that have contributed to their global status, in the opinion of their fans, and to investigate what a strong global sports team brand allows its management to achieve with reference to the available work on theories of brand globalisation. According to reports from research companies, global sports team brands are priced at substantial amounts of money, generate significant revenues and are a lure for millions of sports fans globally. The foreign market expansion plans of some global teams determine the need for advancing research on international sports team branding in order to better understand what characteristics make global team brands attractive for the international fan community and how overseas fans can contribute to the benefits gained by those brands. By focusing on the perspective of foreign fans of global sports team brands, this study adds especially to the international sports marketing literature dealing with sports team brands operating in the global marketplace.

This study employs a mixed-method approach to examine the perspective of fans of various sports teams on the phenomenon of their brands' globalisation. This approach is suitable for outlining the key components and outcomes of a global sports team brand from the fan point of view. The information gained from the literature and from qualitative interviews with sports marketing experts allows the researcher to examine in depth what constitutes a global sports team brand and to hypothesise a model of antecedents and consequences of fans' unique bond with their favourite global team brand. This model is tested in the quantitative online survey conducted among Polish fans of global sports teams. The total number of 614 usable survey responses is subjected to factor and regression analyses. Ultimately, the confirmatory interviews with fans add qualitative insight into the survey results and enhance the overall validity and generalisability of the study's findings. The final model includes three antecedent variables – team brand identity, players/drivers and engagement through marketing – determining whether fans consider a particular global team as their favourite, and five consequences of this choice made by fans – team brand loyalty, team-related product purchase, media consumption, advocacy, and interaction with the team brand and fellow fans. The study concludes with the discussion of implications for the subject literature, methodology and practitioners.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Overview

This chapter outlines a range of justifications for carrying out this study, resulting from the real-world context in which global sports team brands operate, and a critical review of the literature on global sports team brands focusing on their determinants and consequences as seen from their fans perspective. Subsequently, it introduces a set of research questions and formulates the research aim and objectives that facilitated answering those questions and reaching the intended research aim. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

1. The research context and justification for carrying out the study

1.1. The context

Global sports brands do not appear in the rankings of the *world's most valuable brands*; nevertheless they fascinate people. Even those who do not consider themselves sports fans are familiar with the names of the sports brands capable of generating significant revenue. It is possible that this is owing to the magic of sport itself. As Richelieu and Boulaire noted, 'With the exception of music, cinema and religion, there is probably no other field of activity that generates such passion among [people] as sport' (2005: 24). Currently the sports industry is a lucrative business and even during the past economic crises it was in good condition. It could be explained among others by the fact that sport has been lately driven by huge investments undertaken before international sports events (Richelieu 2013) such as the summer Olympic Games London 2012 and Rio de Janeiro 2016; the winter Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014; the World Cup in football in Brazil in 2014, Russia in 2018 and Qatar in 2022. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, the global sports market was set to be worth 145 billion US dollars by 2015 (PWC 2011).

Sports team brands are among those sports brands that especially affect the common imagination. According to reports from research companies and various – more or less formal – rankings, sports team brands are priced at substantial amounts of money, generate significant revenues and are a lure for sports fans globally. In the latest *Forbes* World's 50 Most Valuable Sports Teams report, the value of the first team in the rating – NFL Dallas Cowboys – is estimated at \$4 billion. The second and third are two global Spanish football teams – Real Madrid and Barcelona FC – worth \$3.65 and \$3.55 respectively (Badenhausen 2016). In a similar list of the world's most valuable football team brands from Brand Finance, Real Madrid and Barcelona FC also come in the top three, with their brands priced at \$1.148 million and \$993 million respectively. The first position belongs to Manchester United, which two years in a row tops the table and, according to the latest ranking, its value is \$1,170 million (Brand Finance 2016). Furthermore, in the first 10 most influential sports brands of the Licensing.biz Power List 2015 (issuu 2015) there are four sports teams, all of which are football: Manchester United,

Chelsea FC, Arsenal FC and Barcelona FC. Finally, in Deloitte's Football Money League 2016 reporting the highest earning football teams in the world the leadership of Real Madrid is incontestable – it has topped the table for the 11th consecutive year and during the 2014/2015 season earned £439 million (Deloitte 2016a). The revenue of the runner-up, Barcelona FC, is £426.6 million. The third place went to Manchester United with income of £395.2 million.

Deloitte's Money League is not limited to reporting financial performance and provides data that give an idea of the global popularity of those football teams in the ranking, as reflected in social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram followers). It seems that the teams whose exceptional financial performance has allowed them to occupy the top positions in the Money League also excel in terms of social media presence. They are the most popular teams globally, if one takes into consideration the total number of their followers in all three analysed social media channels: FC Barcelona (132.8 million followers), Real Madrid (128.9 million followers) and Manchester United (83.1 million followers) (Deloitte 2016a; Hover 2016).

Another mark of the popularity of global sports teams is the fact that information about them exceeds daily press sports pages and breaks into general titles, addressed to a wide readership. This builds publicity and awareness of those brands not only among sports fans. In the news those brands are portrayed as enterprises with a global reach whose operations involve substantial amounts of money. The public gets excited when the media report that global sports teams were acquired by foreign investors who often spent a fortune on shares. In the past investments of foreign capital in Premier League teams received prevailing attention from media and sports fans: American Malcolm Glazer's and Russian Roman Abramovich's purchase of Manchester United and Chelsea FC, respectively. Sometime later a business interest in European football teams showed Middle Eastern businesses who acquired among others English Manchester City and French Paris Saint-Germain. Last summer two independent Chinese investors became new owners of local Italian rivals AC Milan and Inter Milan. Former Italian Prime Minister and now also a past owner of AC Milan, Silvio Berlusconi said 'Milan has now embarked on this path towards China' (BBC 2016), words that best illustrate the global aspirations of those football teams whose ownership now lies in the hands of foreign capital.

Sports teams' strategic operations, determined by their foreign market expansion plans, prove that many of them do not want to limit themselves to their domestic markets. Lucrative sports team contracts (or the leagues representing them) with global or regional corporate partners are just a sign of this trend. And it is not just sports media that report record deals with football teams: sportswear manufacturer Adidas signed a 10-year contract worth £750 million with Manchester United to make the team's kit (Wilson 2014; Sale 2014) as well as a lucrative £106 million-per-year renewal of its agreement with Real Madrid (Malyon 2016; Rumsby 2016); and Nike have a £120 million-per-year agreement with Barcelona FC (Costa 2016; Telegraph Sport 2016). In particular big capital is in play when it comes to the sale of broadcasting rights to media companies. In 2014 basketball fans heard about NBA's record-breaking new contract with ABC, ESPN and TNT to televise the League's games from the 2016/2017 season for nine years. The deal is worth \$24 billion, which means that the average annual value is almost three times more than the previous agreement – \$2.67 billion (Golliver

2014). The big money is not only in football and basketball, either. In 2015 Phillip Morris extended its sponsorship contract with the Ferrari F1 team. Since 2008, when tobacco advertising was banned in Formula 1, Marlboro branding has not been clearly displayed on the Ferrari cars. Despite this, the company is said to pay Ferrari approximately \$160 million a year (ESPN 2015). The above examples prove that those sports brands are truly global – other teams limiting their area of business operations to local or domestic markets can only dream of this sort of global business partnership.

The vision and benefits of being a global sports brand lure many people responsible for managing sports team brands all over the world. Some of them aspire to introduce their teams to a group of global brands and, with this aim in mind, they try to replicate some operations undertaken by already successful teams. The NBA's first Chinese owner hopes the Minnesota Timberwolves will become a global brand with the same status as other NBA teams, for instance the New York Knicks or Los Angeles Lakers, and wants to use his business relationships in China to facilitate this (foxsports 2016). Similarly, David Beckham wants to use his image and connections among the best football players in the world (many of whom are his friends) to encourage them to play in his new team. He has set himself an even more ambitious task than the owner of the Minnesota Timberwolves – to build a team from scratch that will eventually go global (BBC 2014; Murray 2016; Hanks and Smiley 2016).

Such wide interest from expert sports publications and the general media in the way global sports team brands operate proves that this topic is worth research attention too. Owing to their worldwide appeal they have become an interesting subject of sports studies. Because sports teams are recognised as brands that generate income and organise their operations in a similar way to any other commercial enterprise, they have broken into the awareness of both highly identified sports fans and people hardly interested in sports. Therefore, there is justification for research into why these brands are attractive to such a vast number of fans worldwide and what consequences this has for them and their strategies as global entities.

1.2. Global sports teams and their foreign-based fans in the existing literature

The media reports mentioned above show that, in general, sports teams are perceived as brands, many of them even as global brands. This is reflected in the existing research, although the literature dealing with strong global team brands is still under development. However, Menefee and Casper suggested in 2011 that 'International sport marketing is poised to become a key topic in marketing during the next decade' (2011: 190). The expansion of some sports teams into parts of the world where they were not previously present determines the need for advancing research on international sports team branding. Teams such as Manchester United or Real Madrid which started their expansion earlier benefited from the pioneer advantage (Bodet and Chanavat 2010). However, this has changed and currently the competition in the global sports market has become intense. Therefore, considering global expansion plans of many teams, their management needs to understand what strategy to take, which of their assets to emphasise to differentiate them from their competitors and how they can benefit from international expansion. The literature concentrating on sports team brands

that operate on a global scale – in and outside their traditional area of influence (i.e. their domestic market) – attempted to address those questions, taking into account specific challenges and opportunities experienced by those brands. Researchers emphasised that sports teams in the global marketplace should focus in their development on aspects other than team brands in their domestic markets (Kerr and Gladden 2008). According to Richelieu and colleagues (Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008; Richelieu and Desbordes 2009; Richelieu 2012), the strategies that football teams use to leverage their brands from a national brand to a global brand need to be different from those undertaken by teams at lower stages of development (local or regional). Hill and Vincent (2006) and Kase et al. (2007) analysed how Manchester United and Real Madrid have become global sports team brands. Richelieu and Pons (2006) examined why some teams become global ones and others do not. On the whole, the literature on global sports team brands is dominated by the managerial perspective. Yet, fan-based analysis should contribute to a more thorough picture of this phenomenon (e.g. Richelieu and Pons 2006; Hill and Vincent 2006). An understanding of the motivations and behaviours of supporters of global sports teams is nowadays, when rivalry between sports brands for fans' money is fierce, particularly important.

Among works examining sports teams from the fan perspective the majority focus on the relationships between fans and teams operating within the same geographical market – for instance US (Gladden and Milne 1999), Germany (Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005), UK (Tapp 2004a). However, research highlighting perceptions of fans who 'have forged an emotional bond with a foreign-based team' (Kerr and Gladden 2008: 61) (i.e. fans and a team come from different markets) is limited. These globally dispersed fans are known as satellite fans and, according to some researchers, are a distinct group from the team's domestic supporters (Kerr and Gladden 2008). Those satellite fans should not be overlooked, especially in the context of global sports team brands in the case of which foreign-based fans outnumber local fans (Kerr and Gladden 2008), and teams' strategies need to be tailored to them (Chadwick 2007).

However, a number of studies explaining how global sports teams can gain their satellite fans' support and benefit from it is limited. Branscombe and Wann (1991) noted that the team's sports success is more important for satellite fans than for those who live in its geographic proximity. In their study Kerr and Gladden (2008) proposed a conceptual framework of customer-based team brand equity developed in the global marketplace. They established their new model of antecedents and outcomes of brand equity based on the frameworks from earlier studies (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999) conducted in the US professional leagues and collegiate sport settings which, however, were not appropriate to explain how brand equity is created in foreign markets. Kerr and Gladden's study was conceptual and was not tested in the fan environment. More empirical studies that examined the relationship between internationally recognised sports teams and their foreign-based fans emerged in just the last few years (Chanavat and Bodet 2009; Bodet and Chanavat 2010; Menefee and Casper 2011; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). Most of them rather focus on the factors explaining why people support international teams and to a lesser extent on the consequences of this support. Overall, there are a limited number of studies

that examine globally recognised team brands from their fans' point of view. This study, by providing the fan perspective on global sports team brands, contributes to the literature on global sports brands, especially the fan-based research strand.

Polish sports fans, whose perspectives were examined in this study are an exemplification of satellite (foreign-based) fans of global sports teams. The Polish sports market is one of the biggest and most profitable in Central-Eastern Europe and Polish fans themselves are recognised for their allegiances to foreign-based sports teams. Owing to the fact that this study looks at global sports team brands from the perspective of a specific group of sports fans, i.e. Polish fans of global sports teams, it also specifically contributes to Polish research in sports. It shows that a sports team managed as a brand can be an extremely valuable asset and can lead to a range of substantial benefits. These are significant contributions to Polish sports research, which needs to consider teams as brands and fans as individuals with certain expectations towards those teams. Currently, sports research conducted in Poland is underdeveloped in terms of studies on branding, in particular branding of sports teams, and seldom examines sports fans as a key audience for sports teams whose role in different areas of their business operations is vital. This work attempts to rectify this situation.

1.3. Justification for carrying out the study

- (1) to outline a model of key antecedents and outcomes of favourite global sports team brands, using a mixed-method approach;
- (2) to meet increasing calls for research on global sports team brands from the consumers' perspective;
- (3) to make team brand management aware, in the light of international expansion of some teams, of the necessity to differentiate their foreign-based (satellite) fans from their local supporters, and to tailor their marketing/branding strategies specifically to those fans, taking into account the differences between them;
- (4) to contribute to Polish research in sports, which is underdeveloped in terms of studies on branding of sports teams, seen from a Polish fan perspective;
- (5) to enhance the practical relevance of this research through engaging practising managers in the research process;
- (6) to direct the attention of those responsible for the sports brand's creation and management to consumers;
- (7) to provide insight into practices that enable sports teams at different levels of development to leverage their brands;
- (8) the researcher's personal interest in sports and sports branding.

2. The research questions, aim and objectives

The primary question the research sought to address is:

From the fans' perspective, what are the antecedents and outcomes of favourite global sports team brands?

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the key brand components crucial for a brand's strength and global appeal?
2. What attracts fans to the global sports brands they support?
3. How does the special nature of global sports brands influence their global appeal?
4. What are the outcomes of having a strong brand for a sports team? What does a strong global sports team brand allow its management to achieve?
5. What could those responsible for managing sports team brands at lower, non-global levels of brand development learn from the findings of this study? How could the findings of this study be applied to the real-world context in which these brands operate?

The aim of this study, set in the field of sports marketing, specifically sports branding, is to build a model of key antecedents and outcomes of successful sports team brands on the basis of initial interviews with brand experts, who in this way contributed to shaping the research methodology, and a systematic review of the literature on sports branding and brand strength. This enhances the practical relevance of the research which is grounded not only in the literature but also in the reality (Panda and Gupta 2014; Toffel 2016). Furthermore, the research aims to use a mixed-method approach to test the above model in the Polish fan environment in order to determine where the global sports team brands' strength comes from in the opinion of their fans and what a strong global sports team brand allows its management to achieve.

The variables in the model – antecedents and outcomes – will be reviewed in one of the next chapters (see section 3 for the structure of the thesis), and the final model will be proposed and discussed in the final chapters. In this chapter the researcher would only like to briefly emphasise that as a result of the interviews with the practitioners the brand favouriteness variable emerged, which embodies the attitude of a sports fan towards his or her favourite global sports team brand. It was included in the model as a distinct construct compared with other concepts known from the literature (e.g. loyalty or identification).

To answer the above research questions and reach the intended research aim, the following research objectives were fulfilled:

- To critically analyse the branding and marketing literature with a focus on international and global branding, global sports team brands and overseas sports fans research.

- To identify the determinants and consequences of global sports team brands highlighted in that literature.
- To hypothesise a model of brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes based on the literature review and the data collected in interviews with brand experts during the exploratory stage of this research.
- To operationalise those antecedents and consequences based on the existing research and exploratory interviews with brand experts.
- To collect data through interviews with experts (1st stage of research) to inform the survey design; online quantitative survey among Polish fans of global football, NBA basketball and Formula 1 teams (2nd stage of research) to test the hypotheses; and interviews with Polish fans (3rd stage of research) to verify the survey results.
- To examine the relationship between the antecedents of brand favouriteness and brand favouriteness, and between brand favouriteness and its outcomes.
- To formulate the practical and theoretical implications of this study (i.e. the implications for subject literature, methodology and practitioners).

3. The structure of the thesis

The structure of this study reflects the steps the researcher took to conduct and complete her research.

Chapter I: **An introduction** outlines the context of the study, rationale for it, research questions, aim and objectives.

Chapter II: **Literature review** covers the review of the literature on the antecedents and outcomes of brands with a focus on the antecedents and outcomes of global sports team brands. It also characterises the concept of global sports team brands and outlines a picture of contemporary sports fans in the days of globalisation.

In Chapter III **Research methods** are discussed; the chapter covers three stages of data collection: exploratory interviews with practitioners, survey of the sample of Polish sports fans of global football, NBA basketball and Formula 1 teams and, finally, confirmatory interviews with a group of Polish fans. The data-analysis techniques used are outlined.

Chapter IV **Model development** proposes the hypothesised model of antecedents and outcomes of global sports team brand favouriteness. The variables in the model are discussed in the light of information obtained in the first phase of the research from two sources of knowledge: initial interviews with brand experts and a systematic review of the literature on sports branding. The relationships between the variables are hypothesised.

Chapter V **Data analysis and interpretation of results** in its first part provides the results of analysis of the quantitative survey data and interviews with fans; in the second part of the chapter the data are discussed and interpreted.

Finally, in Chapter VI **Implications of study and recommendations**, the implications for theory, methodology and practice are discussed along with the limitations of the study and future research opportunities.

Chapter II: Literature review

Overview

This chapter provides a critical review of the literature underpinning the study of antecedents and outcomes of strong global sports team brands. First, the antecedents and outcomes of brands in general research are outlined, and the main concepts referring to fan relationships with sports entities and their motives are reviewed. Furthermore, the literature on global sports branding is examined, including a discussion on the place of contemporary sports fans in the global sports market landscape, followed by a review of studies that explore team-related factors determining the strength and global position of sports team brands (from the managerial and fan perspective) and the consequences that this global position has for the team. The contribution of those works is assessed as well as their limitations. Drawing from this analysis, an initial step is taken for building up a theoretical framework for this study.

1. Brands in general

1.1. What is a brand?

The brand has been defined by the American Marketing Association as ‘A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors’ (Wood 2000: 664). In the existing research there are numerous definitions of brands – some narrower as for example the one from Kotler (2000: 188): ‘a name, trademark, logo, or another symbol...’; some others more detailed shed light on various aspects of brands, for instance the definition from de Chernatony and McDonald (1998: 20):

A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added value, which match their needs most closely. Furthermore, its success results from being variable to sustain these added values in the face of competition.

The interest in brands and the branding process – ‘endowing products and services with the power of a brand’ (Kotler et al. 2009: 861) – result from their importance for the commercial success of firms and organisations. A strong brand is vital for any company competing in the free market. It differentiates an enterprise from its competitors (Kotler 2000; Kapferer 2002) and satisfies the rational and emotional needs of those who acquire it due to its ‘unique added values’ (de Chernatony and McDonald 1998: 20–21). The benefits provided by a strong brand are especially intense as they result from its ‘deep relationships’ with the members of brand community – ‘that is, the brand becomes a meaningful part of [their] life’ (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000: 264). Strong brands are financially valuable (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000; de Chernatony and McDonald 1998) as they generate high levels of loyalty and increased sales. Therefore, a successful brand strategy may be a significant factor in ensuring competitive superiority on the market.

With all those benefits strong brands are considered to be a highly valuable asset for any organisation enabling it to win customers. From the point of view of consumers, brands promise the value: 'A brand is a promise that the product will deliver a satisfactory performance and meet the customer's expectations. It is a mental formulation of what the brand will do for a consumer in an instrumental as well as symbolic sense' (Franzen and Moriarty 2015: 307). It suggests that a brand incorporates both tangible (e.g. logo) and intangible elements (e.g. symbols). These are those intangible elements based on which people differentiate a particular brand from its competitors and that often guide consumer choice (Richelieu 2012).

1.2. Antecedents and outcomes of brands

1.2.1. Brand passion and brand love

Consumer studies use various theoretical concepts to understand relationships between brands and their users. Brand passion and brand love are among those that especially recently have attracted research interest. Both concepts are linked to each other as brand passion is considered to be an element of brand love. In the literature one of the most popular approaches to investigate brand love – and at the same time brand passion – is the triangular theory of love (Sternberg 1986), originally used to conceptualise interpersonal love. According to this theory, passion appears as one of three dimensions of interpersonal love (next to intimacy and decision/commitment).

Shimp and Madden (1988) were the first to transfer the concept of love to consumption contexts. They conceptualised consumer love to objects as composed of three dimensions – liking, yearning and decision/commitment corresponding with Stenberg's intimacy, passion and decision/commitment respectively. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) introduced the concept of 'brand love' defined as 'the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name' (2006: 81) and characterised by: passion for the brand, attachment to the brand, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand and declarations of love for the brand. Love is the most intense emotion of an individual towards a brand (Shimp and Madden 1988; Huber, Meyer and Schmid 2015). It does not come as a surprise then that love can be used to describe an individual's relationship with a limited number of brands (Thomson, MacInnis and Park 2005; Huber, Meyer and Schmid 2015). In Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi's study (2012) all participants admitted to feeling 'love' or 'sort-of-love' to at least one brand. Brand love is unidirectional (in which it differs from interpersonal love) (Whang et al. 2004; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen 2010). Some people speak 'loosely' about loving their brands (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006) and treat brand love as not as important as interpersonal love (Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi 2012), which suggests that these two concepts are not entirely identical. Those who truly love a particular brand may feel anxiety when it is unavailable on the market and are deeply passionate for it (Shimp and Madden 1988; Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi 2012).

Brand passion, similarly to brand love, was primarily identified with human relationships but in time it has been used to describe the relationship between brands and their users (Matzler, Pichler and Hemetsberger 2007; Shimp and Madden 1988). As with human relationships brand passion may exist

as a standalone concept but it can also be described in the context of a wider concept of love – as its essential aspect (Hsu, Chih and Liou 2015). As mentioned above, in Sternberg's theory (1986) passion is a vital component of love and corresponds to yearning – one of the dimensions of consumer love to objects (Shimp and Madden 1988). The existing research portrays brand passion as an intense, enthusiastic, extremely positive attitude towards a specific brand (Bauer, Heinrich and Martin 2007). Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2013) defined it as 'a psychological construct comprised of excitation, infatuation, and obsession for a brand' (2013: 905). It motivates people 'to desire and imagine possessing products and develop a passionate relationship with brands' (Hsu, Chih and Liou 2015: 1757). Passion is essential for all strong brand relationships and has a crucial impact on the quality of relationships people have with brands (Fournier 1998). Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge (2014) indicated two types of brand passion – harmonious and obsessive. Harmonious passion develops when an individual does not experience any external pressure to use a brand. It is his or her decision to continue the passionate relationship with it; contrary to obsessive passion where due to interpersonal and intrapersonal pressures this relationship is beyond one's control.

While the conceptualisations of brand passion and brand love have been extensively discussed in the literature, factors affecting their development and the consequences they generate have received less attention. As these two concepts are linked to each other their antecedents and outcomes are to some extent similar.

The research on brand love antecedents highlights a role of identification. An individual is more likely to demonstrate love for a brand he or she identifies with (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen 2010; Albert and Merunka 2013). In other words, the more he or she perceives that his or her image overlaps with the brand's image (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006), the more lovable the brand is. According to Albert and Merunka (2013), in addition to identification equally important for the development of brand love is brand trust. The impact of these two was confirmed in Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru's (2016) study. Product/brand-related antecedents such as self-expressiveness or hedonic value of a brand also explain why people love some brands (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Wallace, Buil and de Chernatony 2014; Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru 2016). A self-expressive brand generates greater brand love due to symbolic benefits it offers; it 'enhances one's social self and/or reflects one's inner self' (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006: 82). Those brands allow an individual to express his or her self, and to communicate it to others (Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi 2012; Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru 2016). Hedonic product categories are associated with hedonic benefits such as fun, pleasure or enjoyment (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006: 82). Such products respond to one's need for self-expression and prestige (Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru 2016: 530). Out of these two, self-expressiveness contributes more to the development of brand love than hedonic product value (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru 2016).

As far as the brand love outcomes are concerned, available studies point out at least one of the following three: positive word-of-mouth (WOM), loyalty and willingness to pay a higher price (e.g. Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2009; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen

2010; Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi 2012; Albert and Merunka 2013; Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru 2016). People who love a particular brand are ready to accept an increase in price, only to be able to continue their relationship with that brand (Albert and Merunka 2013), especially that – as mentioned above – they experience anxiety faced with brand unavailability. People also tend to be loyal towards their lovable brands (Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2009). Brand love results in both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty (Albert and Merunka 2013). In addition to brand loyalty as an outcome of brand love Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) indicated active engagement, a concept wider than WOM, of which WOM is only one of the manifestations. They argued that the relevance of WOM may vary depending on the type of products, while active engagement should be applicable to a range of products. Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru (2016) demonstrated that as a consequence of brand love two types of WOM are observed – eWOM and offline WOM. The relationship between brand love and offline WOM is strengthened by brand price and one's experience with the brand.

On the other hand, brand passion relates to characteristics of a brand itself, brand user characteristics and the relationships between a brand and its users (Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2013). Bauer, Heinrich and Martin (2007) found that uniqueness, self-expression ability, hedonic features and prestige of a brand affect people's passion for it. Arguing that brand passion is a relational construct Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2013) suggested that such constructs as brand trust and brand identification can also affect its development. Brand identification especially seems to be one of the most important brand passion antecedents (Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2013; Rohra and Sharma 2016). As shown by Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge (2014) the central component of brand identification – the level of brand self-expression – plays an important role here. Finally, whether brand passion develops may depend on an individual's personality. Extraverts are more likely to become passionate about brands (Matzler, Pichler and Hemetsberger 2007). However, Bauer, Heinrich and Martin (2007) did not manage to confirm this relationship. They suspected that some characteristics of a brand user can affect brand passion in different consumption contexts (2007: 2193). The extent to which people are susceptible to interpersonal influence also matters: those who are more susceptible are also more likely to develop an obsessive type of brand passion (Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge 2014).

Among the most popular outcomes of brand passion the existing research identified willingness to pay a higher price (Thomson, MacInnis and Park 2005; Bauer, Heinrich and Martin 2007; Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge 2014) and positive WOM (Bauer, Heinrich and Martin 2007; Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2013; Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge 2014). People who are passionate about some brands want to share their passion with others; they feel a need to share their excitement and emotions about the brand. Sharing a positive word about the brand contributes to constructing one's identity (Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2013; Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge 2014). Matzler, Pichler and Hemetsberger (2007) and Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge (2014) argued that brand love may lead to brand evangelism that is a more active way of sharing one's passion about a brand than simply by spreading a positive word. Willingness to pay a higher brand price is considered to be an important outcome of brand passion. However, according to

Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2013), sometimes people are not prepared to accept a major change in price, even though they have a passion for the brand. The change in price may be in conflict with the brand they idealise in their minds (2013: 908). Those who are obsessively passionate with their brands feel a compulsory need to acquire them and subsequently are ready to pay more (Swimberghe, Astakhova and Wooldridge 2014) than those who developed harmonious passion.

1.2.2. Brand identification

Brand identification refers to the relationship between brands and their users. It can be defined as 'a customer's psychological state of perceiving, feeling, and valuing his or her belongingness with a brand' (Lam et al. 2010: 130) or 'a consumer's perceived state of oneness with a brand' (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012: 407). These definitions highlight one thing – an individual's oneness with the brand. A condition under which this 'oneness' occurs is an individual's perception that the 'brand reflects characteristics that are central to [one's] identity' (Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013: 372). Only then an individual is able to incorporate them into his or her self-identity, which is subsequently communicated to others (Underwood, Bond and Baer 2001; Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013).

Self-congruity or brand-self similarity – both terms are used interchangeably (Maggioni 2014) – has been recognised in existing research as a vital driver of an individual's identification with the brand. The self-congruity principle refers to the degree of match between the symbolic attributes of brands and an individual's self-concept. The greater similarity between the perceived brand personality and the brand user personality the more likely it is that he or she will identify with the brand (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012). In their study conducted among Slovenian users of various types of brands (from clothes to food to motoring) Tuskej, Golob and Podnar (2013) demonstrated that congruity of consumer and brand values can lead to stronger brand identification. Moreover, people often tend to identify with the brands they perceive to be particularly prestigious, as by associating themselves with prestigious brands they increase their own self-esteem (Kuenzel and Halliday 2008; Balaji, Roy and Sadeque 2016).

On the other hand, identification leads to various pro-brand consequences. Highly identified customers are loyal (Kuenzel and Halliday 2010; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012) and manifest intentions to repurchase the brand in the future (Kuenzel and Halliday 2008). They are also likely to engage in brand referrals and positive WOM (e.g. Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012; Kuenzel and Halliday 2008). Brand identification is also a strong predictor of brand love and brand passion (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen 2010; Albert and Merunka 2013; Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2013; Rohra and Sharma 2016). See Table 1 (section 1.2.3) for the main antecedents and outcomes of brand identification.

1.2.3. Brand loyalty

Loyalty, a key to commercial success of any brand, has been acknowledged in the marketing literature as a vital outcome variable (Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson 2016). Oliver (1999) defined it as 'a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior' (1999: 34). This definition emphasises the complex nature of the concept which is two-dimensional (e.g. Day 1969) – comprising attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. Behavioural loyalty has been traditionally defined as an individual's repeat purchasing behaviour of a brand (Kabiraj and Shanmugan 2011). On the other hand, attitudinal loyalty refers to the consumer's commitment to a brand and his or her intention to repurchase it (Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy and Coote 2007; Choi et al. 2010; Alnawas and Altarifi 2016; Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson 2016). Another conceptualisation of loyalty is proposed by Oliver (1997 cited in Oliver 1999). In his view it develops in four stages: cognitive, affective and conative and action. Action loyalty responds to the abovementioned behavioural loyalty dimension (Hwang and Cooper 2012), while the three remaining stages – cognitive, affective and conative – characterise the development of attitudinal loyalty (Oliver 1999; Lee et al. 2010; Hwang and Cooper 2012).

Past research proposes numerous factors that lead to the development of brand loyalty (Li and Petrick 2008; Chinomona 2016). This might stem to some extent from the complexity of the loyalty concept. The fact that there are variables that were recognised as crucial in some works to be marginalised in others also does not help to fully understand why people become loyal customers (Li and Petrick 2008). The antecedents of brand loyalty can be grouped into cognitive, affective and conative; those that have a direct impact on loyalty and those affecting it indirectly (Dick and Basu 1994; Touzani and Temessek 2009). Undoubtedly, among all direct brand loyalty determinants satisfaction is often brought by researchers as one of the most widely accepted and powerful at the same time (Song 2015). Satisfaction reflects a consumer's evaluation of the brand experience accumulated over time (Nam, Ekinci and Whyatt 2011; Bianchi, Drennan and Proud 2014). Kuikka and Laukkanen (2012) demonstrated that it is a good predictor of both loyalty dimensions: attitudinal and – in particular – behavioural. The key role of satisfaction in loyalty development was proved in various industries, for instance: small business services sector (Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy and Coote 2007), wine industry (Bianchi, Drennan and Proud 2014), banking (Lewis and Soureli 2006) or leisure/tourism (Li and Petrick 2008). In addition to satisfaction, other factors that received much research attention as important predictors of brand loyalty are trust – 'the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function' (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001: 82), and perceived brand quality – a customer's perception about a product/service total advantage or excellence (Andervazh et al. 2016: 203).

As for the outcomes of loyalty, research shows that loyal customers often share their experiences regarding the brand of a product or service with others through WOM (e.g. Dick and Basu 1994; Gounaris and Stathakopoulos 2004; Watson IV et al. 2015) described as loyalty's 'single most expected behavioural outcome' (Gounaris and Stathakopoulos 2004: 292). This 'volitional post-

purchase communications' (Dick and Basu 1994: 107) was proved to follow loyalty in various industries, e.g. alcoholic beverages industry (Gounaris and Stathakopoulos 2004); banking (Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu 2008), pharmaceuticals (Athavale et al. 2015) or e-commerce (Srinivasan, Anderson and Ponnayolu 2002). The main antecedents and outcomes of brand loyalty are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Selected antecedents and outcomes of loyalty/identification

	Selected antecedents and outcomes of loyalty/identification
Loyalty	<p>ANTECEDENTS Satisfaction (Dick and Basu 1994; Lewis and Soureli 2006; Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy and Coote 2007; Li and Petrick 2008; Bianchi, Drennan and Proud 2014) Trust (Harris and Goode 2004; Touzani and Temessek 2009; Bianchi, Drennan and Proud 2014) Perceived quality (Esmailpour 2015; Andervazh et al. 2016) Other selected variables: perceived brand value (Lewis and Soureli 2006); identification (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012); switching costs (Dick and Basu 1994); consumer characteristics (Gounaris and Stathakopoulos 2004); brand characteristics (Gounaris and Stathakopoulos 2004)</p> <p>OUTCOMES WOM (e.g. Dick and Basu 1994; Gounaris and Stathakopoulos 2004; Watson IV et al. 2015) The consequences include among others: brand extension purchase (Choi et al. 2010); resistance to persuasion from competitors (Dick and Basu 1994); willingness to pay premium price (Sutikno 2011).</p>
Identification	<p>ANTECEDENTS Self-congruity (Kuenzel and Halliday 2010; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012; Tuskej, Golob and Podnar 2013) Brand prestige (Kuenzel and Halliday 2008; Balaji, Roy and Sadeque 2016) Other selected variables: brand distinctiveness (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012); brand identity (He, Li and Harris 2012); trust (Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013); satisfaction (Kuenzel and Halliday 2008); brand warmth (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012); reputation (Kuenzel and Halliday 2010)</p> <p>OUTCOMES WOM/brand advocacy (e.g. Kuenzel and Halliday 2008; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012; Tuskej, Golob and Podnar 2013); Brand loyalty (Kuenzel and Halliday 2010; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012) Brand commitment (Tuskej, Golob and Podnar 2013) Intentions to re-purchase (Kuenzel and Halliday 2008) Oppositional brand referrals intentions (Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013) Brand love (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen 2010; Albert and Merunka 2013) Brand passion (Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence 2013; Rohra and Sharma 2016)</p>

1.3. Sports brands

Interestingly, as existing researchers demonstrated, conceptualisation of sports brands is not easy. Rein, Kotler and Shields (2006) defined a sports brand as ‘... a synthesis of facts and images that comprise a sports product and is often defined by slogans, themes, positions, symbols, product characteristics, and a number of other tangible and intangible attributes’ (2006: 97). However, for some researchers what the term ‘sports brand’ covers is not so apparent.

For instance, Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet (2013) find the concept of a sports brand ambiguous. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the boundary between what a sports brand is and what it is not is often blurred. There are many brands which undoubtedly may be called sports brands that also cover non-sports products (for example Manchester United provides its fans with access to banking). On the other hand, there are brands whose main commercial activity centres around manufacturing non-sports products but at one point they start to offer sports goods (for instance sports shoes). The question arises if now they can be described as sports brands.

A range of sports brands typologies available in the literature that is a consequence of diversity of sports organisations also does not shed light on the definition problem. It can partially be explained by the fact that these typologies are generated by researchers from various academic fields (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013). For instance, sports brands are perceived differently by economists and management experts on the one hand and by marketing researchers on the other. For the former, sports brands are corporate brands that manufacture products purchased and used by sport participants such as for example sports goods, clothes and shoes. Brands of broadcast companies, sports events, leagues, teams and governing bodies are excluded from the sports brand category. In contrast, some sports marketing researchers exclude most corporate brands and mainly focus on leagues, teams and events (2013: 5). Interestingly, others (e.g. Milligan 2009) suggest a wider typology covering companies that produce sports products (e.g. Nike), sponsors (Coca-Cola – sponsor of Olympic Games), organisations (UEFA), events (Olympic Games), teams (FC Barcelona) and players (David Beckham). Also Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet (2013) lean towards a wider conceptualisation of what sports brands should cover; they identified three main categories of sports brands – classical brands; certification and label brands; and sport-specific brands.

Sports brands belong to most popular consumer brands (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013) and bring out strong emotions in people. It was well put by Richelieu (2012) in respect of sports team brands: ‘Indisputably, with the exception of entertainment, religion and politics, professional sports teams generate an unmatched emotional response from their fans’ (2012: 15). What factors lead fans to support specific teams is one of the key issues sports researchers try to explain.

1.4. Antecedents and motives for fan loyalty/engagement/identification

1.4.1. Loyalty

Loyalty in the context of sports teams can be defined as an affective commitment (Kumar et al. 1994 cited in Choi et al. 2010: 474) that can motivate fans to continue the relationship with a specific sports team brand (Hansen and Hem 2004). As stated in section 1.2.3 loyalty comprises two aspects: behavioural and attitudinal – in other words consumption behaviour and attitudes (e.g. Jacoby 1971; Jacoby and Kyner 1973).

In the case of sports teams the psychological component of loyalty, attitudinal loyalty, reflects the strength of commitment to a particular team (e.g. Funk and James 2006; Kunkel, Hill and Funk 2013). When demonstrated by sports fans it refers to the 'degree of attachment to a team or event, which is conceptualized as an individual's highly-developed attitude toward the sport product' (Dwyer 2011: 447). Lee et al. (2010), having applied Oliver's loyalty framework (1997) to the licensed sports products industry, confirmed that sports fans' attitudinal brand loyalty of licensed sports products is developed in a sequence, through three stages – cognitive, affective and conative. Cognition is based on brand beliefs, prior knowledge and experience-based information about brand attributes (Oliver 1999: 35). Affect develops as a result of satisfactory usage of the brand and involves an irrational and emotional approach to the brand (Oliver 1999; Lee et al. 2010). Finally, the conative phase is associated with behavioural intention: 'Conation ... implies a brand-specific commitment to repurchase' (Oliver 1999: 35). In sports the attitudinal dimension of fans' loyalty is represented by repatronage intention (Bodet and Bernache-Assollant 2011; Wu, Tsai and Hung 2012) – i.e. the intention or willingness to continuously attend future sports events (e.g. Bodet and Bernache-Assollant 2011), to continue support for a team (e.g. Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002b), to repurchase sports products (e.g. Lee et al. 2010).

Fans' behavioural loyalty manifests itself through various repeat consumption behaviours. Traditionally they include live attendance, merchandise purchase and media broadcast consumption (e.g. Gladden and Funk 2001; Kwon, Trail and Anderson 2005; Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler 2008). Some researchers argue that currently in the days of globalisation it is not rare that fans of sports teams do not live in their close geographical proximity; therefore, other loyal behaviours may also be observed: wearing team merchandise or brand evangelism behaviours (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler 2008; Dwyer, Greenhalgh and LeCrom 2015). In some studies a solely behavioural approach to conceptualising loyalty was adopted. Its critics argued, however, that it does not allow a distinction between fans' true and spurious loyalty, in case of which consumption behaviour is due to, for instance, a lack of other convenient opportunities, habit, financial (accessible ticket price) or social (watching games with family/friends) reasons (Backman and Crompton 1991; Mahony, Madrigal and Howard 2000). The two dimensions of sports team loyalty are separate but directly related – as loyal attitudes guide loyal behaviours (Dwyer 2011; Dwyer, Greenhalgh and LeCrom 2015).

Having loyal fans is crucial for a commercial success of any sports organisation. Therefore, the factors leading to fan loyalty have been widely discussed in past studies.

A significant part of research investigating the factors leading to fan loyalty towards sports teams focuses on the impact of internal/personal and external/social motives (Tsiotsou 2013). Socialising agents such as parents (usually fathers), friends and media play an important role in introducing a team to children and, as a consequence, in the initial development of team loyalty in children (James 2001). According to Tapp (2004a), the social influence of family and other followers affects both dimensions of football fans loyalty – behavioural and attitudinal. Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002b) revealed that friends' influence on a decision to attend intercollegiate basketball games is stronger in the case of female than male spectators.

Personal fans' characteristics may also contribute to loyalty towards a team. Mahony, Madrigal and Howard (1999) examined the impact of self-monitoring which 'is concerned with individual differences in the willingness or ability to modify behaviour in accordance with the norms of situational appropriateness' (Miller and Thayer 1988 cited in Mahony, Madrigal and Howard 1999: 148). They showed that low rather than high self-monitoring NFL fans are more likely to demonstrate greater behavioural loyalty. These results, however, were not entirely confirmed in other studies. Richardson and O'Dwyer (2003) having partially replicated Mahony, Madrigal and Howard's study did not find a connection between self-monitoring and fan loyalty among Irish football fans who – on the whole – do not show a tendency to switch teams. Only some of them admitted to doing so in their childhood.

Research demonstrated also that motivations, considered to be other personal fans' characteristics (Yun and Rosenberger 2014), can be useful in predicting fan loyalty. Among them the benefits sought by fans (for instance vicarious achievement, escape, aesthetics, eustress, socialisation) proved to play an important role (Chen 2006). While the applicability of some of them may vary – depending on a research setting (Wang, Zhang and Tsuji 2011), it seems that vicarious achievement is among those most frequently mentioned in past studies (Mahony et al. 2002; Wu, Tsai and Hung 2012). It refers to the team's ability to provide 'a heightened sense of personal or collective esteem' (Neale and Funk 2005: 44), and proved to have a vital impact on fans' loyalty levels (e.g. Mahony et al. 2002; Neale and Funk 2005; Wang, Zhang and Tsuji 2011).

Moreover, past research demonstrated that players who represent team attributes can influence fan loyalty. Players as role models and interest in players as part of the Sport Interest Inventory (Funk et al. 2001; Funk, Mahony and Ridinger 2002; Funk, Ridinger and Moorman 2003), and players' qualities included in the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (Trail and James 2001) facilitated the explanation of loyalty of sports fans. Attachment to a favourite player is an important motive for the Japanese Professional Soccer League (J. League) spectators (Mahony et al. 2002) linked to the length of time as a fan and frequency of game attendance.

Finally, researchers analysed the mechanisms that contribute to loyalty development such as attachment and satisfaction (e.g. Kwon, Trail and Anderson 2005; Chen 2006; Tsiotsou 2013). Funk and James (2006) defined attachment as 'a process that occurs when an individual assigns emotional, functional, and symbolic meaning to ideas, thoughts, and images related to a sport object (e.g., team)' (2006: 196). Using the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) (which illustrates the development of the various psychological connections that an individual may form with a team/sport) they demonstrated that attachment to a team/sport may lead to the allegiance (in other words loyalty) (Funk and James 2001, 2006). In university sport attachment to a team was found to affect all the dimensions of fans' loyalty (Kwon, Trail and Anderson 2005). Its influence turned out to be much stronger than the impact of other motives: attachment to sport, coach, player, level of sport (i.e. collegiate) and university. In a qualitative study of Chen (2006) attachment was established as one of four essential and direct antecedents of loyalty among sports tourists – members of a booster club who travelled to away games with the university basketball team.

On the other hand, the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty seems to be ambiguous. In the abovementioned Chen's (2006) work satisfaction is one of the essential antecedents of loyalty, whereas Yun and Rosenberger (2014) showed that its impact on fan loyalty may be significant but weak. Interestingly, Tapp (2004a) discovered that satisfaction with a team performance plays a role in forming only low levels of football fan loyalty, while in the case of highly loyal followers other factors turn out to be more important. This is logical as sports fans are known from their allegiance, often demonstrated despite unsatisfying teams' on-field results.

1.4.2. Fan engagement

The concept of engagement has, especially recently, become the subject of academic discussion. In general research the terminology used in relation to it is diverse: researchers explored consumer- (or customer-) brand engagement, brand engagement and consumer/customer engagement (i.e. referring to individuals' engagement with various objects such as brands). Sashi (2012) suggested that customer engagement takes place when relational exchange and emotional bonds are strong between customers and the company, product or brand; this is a moment when customers turn into fans, the term that often stands for customers in sport.

Fan engagement is a form of customer engagement specific to the sports context (Yoshida et al. 2014). However, to date it has received relatively little research attention. One of the first attempts to conceptualise fan engagement was made by Yoshida et al. (2014), according to whom it reflects a fan's non-transactional behaviour. This conceptualisation was necessary in the light of confusion that arose around the term 'engagement' among sports researchers who used it interchangeably with such constructs as commitment, involvement, attachment or identification (Doyle et al. 2016). Yoshida et al. (2014) defined fan engagement as 'a sport consumer's extrarole behaviours in nontransactional exchanges to benefit his or her favourite sport team, the team's management, and other fans' (2014:

403). This definition emphasises that the construct is multidimensional and comprises: management cooperation, prosocial behaviour and performance tolerance.

In their study Yoshida et al. (2014) demonstrated that three factors – team identification, positive affect and BIRGing lead to fan engagement. All three variables contribute to its development, with team identification and BIRGing having a particularly strong impact. Team identification turns out to be the most powerful antecedent as it affects all fan engagement dimensions: management cooperation, prosocial behaviour and performance tolerance. Management cooperation (i.e. helping team management) covers fans' behaviours through which they contribute to a sports event implementation and value creation. Prosocial behaviours (i.e. helping other fans) refer to fan-to-fan help on behalf of the team. Finally, performance tolerance (i.e. helping the team) concerns displaying the team's colours and logo even despite its poor on-the-field results (2014: 404). Out of the two remaining predictors BIRGing is more meaningful than positive affect. They both impact two of three fan engagement dimensions: BIRGing – management cooperation and prosocial behaviour, while positive affect – management cooperation and performance tolerance.

Yoshida et al's. conceptualisation of fan engagement was employed in the study of Stander and de Beer (2016) who found that those fans who frequently use their teams' social media channels and those who belong to formal supporters' branches demonstrate higher degree of overall engagement. In line with these results in their other work (de Beer and Stander 2016) they established a direct link between the regularity of social media usage and one of the fan engagement dimensions, performance tolerance.

Furthermore, Stander, Van Zyl and Motaung (2016) showed in their study that motivational factors for sport consumption can be good predictors of fan engagement with sports teams. Having differentiated between game-related and individual/personal motives from the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) (Trail and James 2001; Trail 2012) the researchers argued that the impact of those factors on various clusters of fans vary. While some followers may develop their engagement towards a sports team mainly due to individual/personal motives (vicarious achievement, aesthetics, drama, escape), others may be more influenced by game-related factors (acquisition of knowledge, physical attractiveness of the athletes, physical skills of the participants or social interaction).

Finally, fan engagement can also be linked to norms dominating in some societies (Yoshida and Heere 2015). For instance, fans from collectivist cultures such as Asian tend to 'possess a sense of mutual interdependence and act in caring and prosocial ways' (2015: 210). As a result they are more likely to demonstrate a higher degree of engagement in non-transactional consumer behaviours (Yoshida et al. 2014) than people from individualistic societies.

1.4.3. Identification

Identification with sports brands (or entities underlying these sports brands) is based on social identity theory. An individual's social identity is defined as 'the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership' (Tajfel 1982 cited in Yuksel, McDonald and Joo 2016: 71). In other words belonging to certain social groups (e.g. sports fans) contributes to an individual's social identity. Sports entities, which generate high levels of consumer identification (Underwood, Bond and Baer 2001) help to fulfil self-definitional needs of sports fans.

In past sports research much attention was drawn to fan identification with sports teams. Wann (2006b) referring to his earlier works (Wann and Branscombe 1993; Wann et al. 2001) defined team identification as: '... the extent to which a fan feels a psychological connection to a team and the team's performances are viewed as self-relevant' (2006b: 332). Similarly Wu, Tsai and Hung (2012) emphasised a oneness with the team by conceptualising identification as 'the individuals' perception of the link between themselves and the sport team, even considering the successes and failures of the team as their personal experiences' (2012: 179).

The degree of fan identification with a team varies – from low to moderate to high. Highly identified fans have a strong perception of oneness with their team and this identification is part of their identity (Wann and Branscombe 1990). They react emotionally to their team's on-field performance and strongly perceive its successes and failures as personal (Gwinner and Swanson 2003; Wann 2006b). Highly identified fans – more than fans low in identification – are likely to associate with a successful team, which is manifested in the Basking In Reflected Glory (BIRG) process and leads to increased self-esteem (Wann and Branscombe 1990, 1993); whereas when confronted with the poor performance they maintain their relationship with the team displaying low tendency to distance themselves from it through the Cutting Off Reflected Failure (CORF) mechanism. Wann and Branscombe (1990) described them as 'die-hard fans'. Contrary to them fans with lower identification levels are less expected to display BIRG and more frequently employ the CORF mechanism to cope with their team's failure. According to Wann and Branscombe (1990), for these 'fair-weather fans' the team is less important than for individuals high in identification (1990: 111) – 'they are followers of sport entertainment and not necessarily the team' (Sutton et al. 1997: 17). Their involvement in a relationship with their team is low, unlike in the case of highly identified fans who devote their time and financial resources to maintain strong links with their team on a long-term basis (Wann and Branscombe 1993; Sutton et al. 1997). Interestingly, highly identified fans feel they have a strong relationship not only with the team but also with fellow fans who they perceive as bonded together, special, and to whom they attribute positive characteristics (Wann and Branscombe 1993; Wakefield 2007).

As mentioned above highly identified fans are more likely to be involved in various consumption behaviours (or to demonstrate intentions to undertake them) that, subsequently, directly or indirectly

benefit their teams. A number of works on the consequences of sports team identification demonstrates that it is an important predictor of live game attendance (e.g. Wann and Branscombe 1993; Fisher 1998; Fisher and Wakefield 1998). It was proved that fans high in identification frequently watch their team live at a sports venue (Fisher 1998; Fisher and Wakefield 1998). Moreover, while there are other factors that can explain live attendance, identification turned out to be the most powerful (Wann 2006b). Additionally, with an increase in the level of identification the amount of money fans are willing to pay for tickets to their team's important games increases (Wann and Branscombe 1993). Identification also leads to indirect game consumption that takes place through media (Fisher 1998; Wann 2006b). This form of game consumption is often the only one available to fans identifying with overseas teams (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). Furthermore, strongly identified fans are more likely to purchase team-related merchandise – either for themselves or as gifts for others (Fisher and Wakefield 1998; Kwon and Armstrong 2006; Donovan, Janda and Suh 2006). By purchasing and displaying merchandise – a symbol of their relationship with the team – they reinforce their identification, maintain their bond with the team and other fellow fans and make it clear to people from outside this group which team they follow (Fisher and Wakefield 1998; Wakefield 2007). Finally, high identification is a strong predictor of fan loyalty – both attitudinal and behavioural (Kwon, Trail and Anderson 2005; Theodorakis, Wann and Weaver 2012; Wu, Tsai and Hung 2012). Fans high in identification are capable of establishing 'the strongest, most loyal and longest term-relationship' (Sutton et al. 1997: 17) with their team – even despite, as mentioned above, its on-field failures.

Having taken into consideration a number of positive outcomes that fan identification with a team can lead to researchers have tried to understand what actually motivates people to identify with a specific team. Wann (2006b) suggested there are various possible antecedents and to some extent it is difficult to establish what motivates a particular fan to team identification, as to much extent it is an individual issue. He referred to research of Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) who discovered that only about 10 per cent of identification antecedents mentioned by their respondents repeated across sample. According to Wann (2006b), the factors indicated in various studies as the most influential predictors of fans' identification with sports teams fall into three groups: psychological, environmental and team-related. Psychological factors include among others community affiliation and linked to it a fan's need to belong (Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Sutton et al. 1997). Socialisation agents such as family, friends and media (which facilitate the development of identification regardless of where the team is based) (Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Sutton et al. 1997) Wann (2006b) considered to be the key environmental factor. Finally, team-related antecedents such as team organisational characteristics (for instance tradition, history, reputation) (e.g. Underwood, Bond and Baer 2001), player/team attractiveness and similarity (e.g. Fisher 1998; Wakefield 2007) and team on-field success (e.g. End et al. 2002) can also contribute to fan identification. Success seems to have particular influence on the development of identification in those fans who do not live within a geographic proximity of the team (Branscombe and Wann 1991).

2. Global brands

2.1. Global branding

Having a successful brand strategy takes on a special significance in the global market. Recent editions of periodicals such as the *Harvard Business Review*, *The Journal of Brand Management*, *Marketing Week* or *The Economist* devote much attention to global brand strategies. They are currently monitoring the latest developments in both the theory and practice of global brand building.

Theodore Levitt's article 'The globalization of markets' (1983) published in the *Harvard Business Review* is considered to be a turning point in the discussion of global branding. In this work, he describes the 'sweeping emergence of a global market for uniform ... products' (Quelch 2003: 22). Holt, Quelch and Taylor (2004), in the same journal, came to the conclusion that people all over the world associate global brands with three dimensions: quality signal, global myth and social responsibility. They suggest that buyers evaluate brands on those characteristics when making purchase decisions (2004: 71). In another article, the appearance of the post-global brand is signalled by Kapferer (2005). He suggested that the post-modern brand has resulted from the brands' need to adapt to cultural and geographic differences in markets (2005: 321).

Similar to the concept of globalisation, defining a global brand is a complex task. There is a lack of agreement about what it exactly means to globalise a brand. For some researchers and practitioners a global brand is the same as a standardised brand offered in different countries. Holt, Quelch and Taylor (2004: 69) suggest that to some extent such an approach is a consequence of interpretation of Levitt's article (1983), in that 'managers interpreted his ideas to mean the transnational companies should standardize products, packaging, and communication to achieve a least-common-denominator positioning that would be effective across cultures'. On the other hand, authors such as Duffy and Medina warn that globalisation should not be understood as standardisation because they refer to two totally different processes (Duffy and Medina 1998: 228).

However, even those who are in favour of the former approach to global branding are not clear as far as the degree of standardisation is concerned. For instance, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000: 306) consider global brands to be 'brands with a high degree of similarity across countries with respect to brand identity, position, advertising strategy, personality, product, packaging, and look and feel'. However, Aaker, in his earlier work, suggested that planning for a brand globalisation strategy involves personal and deliberate decisions from the brand management team: 'The trick [is] to globalise those elements [of equity] for which there is a resulting payoff in cost or impact, and allow the other elements ... to be customized to local markets' (1991: 268).

A global brand is often defined in the context of the values it brings to those who purchase the brand. The more valuable it is considered to be, the higher quality is assigned to it. A global brand is known in the world and 'has proven worldwide appeal' (Hill and Vincent 2006: 213) and is perceived as highly prestigious by many people (Adapa 2008: 8). Overall, from the point of view of those who acquire it, a

brand is global as long as it has a global awareness and is successfully 'marketed not only locally but also in some foreign markets' (Altaras and Özsomer 2008: 3).

2.2. Global sports brands vs global sports team brands

Sports marketing research focuses on various types of sports global brands that attract fans across the borders. Some researchers examine the phenomenon of popular athletes considered as brands, and often as endorsers of other non-sports brand products (e.g. David Beckham, Michael Phelps, Roger Federer), whose images appeal to global fans (Chadwick and Burton 2008; Vincent, Hill and Lee 2009; Hollensen and Schimmelpfennig 2013; Carrillat and d'Astous 2014). Subjects of studies are also sports leagues whose area of influence exceed their domestic markets, for instance English Premier League football (Kunkel, Funk and King 2014), and global sports competitions and events such as UEFA Champions League or FIFA World Cup (Chadwick and Holt 2007; Holt 2007; Wieszka 2011). Finally, a considerable part of research is dedicated to sports team brands which, as stated earlier, attract the attention of the public – sports fans in particular – and the media.

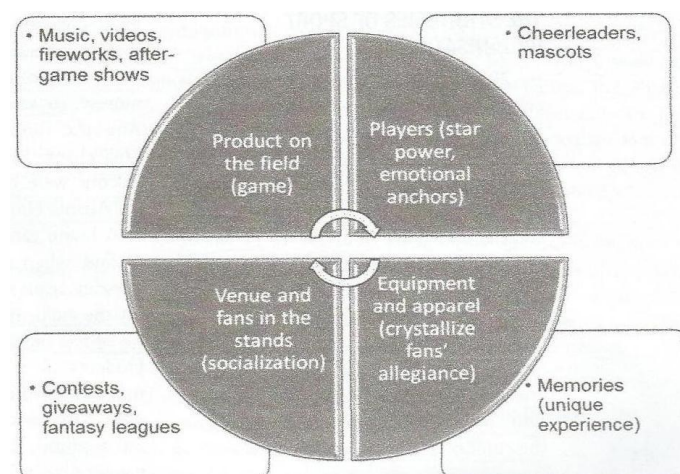
Sports brands belong to most popular brands probably because 'they represent a true universal language' and they 'have fully integrated with people's lives' (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013: 1). Due to their universality sports brands are capable of appealing to people throughout the world and reach global status. Global sports brands are 'global commodity signs, recognized and consumed on a universal basis' (Giulianotti 1999: 89). The meanings they provide are relevant to consumers across various territories (Van Gelder 2002 cited in Richelieu 2012: 36). People choose them due to perceived higher quality and superiority of the brands themselves and their core product (e.g. Richelieu and Desbordes 2009; Pyun, Kwon and Lee 2011; Richelieu 2012; Charumbira 2016). Specifically, global sports team brands, as Charumbira (2016) pointed out, are global market leaders in their brand category. According to him, global sports team brands are those that are 'highly visible across the globe and [are] perceived as stronger, more favourable and highly differentiated from other brands in [their] category' (2016: 19). Richelieu and colleagues (Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008; Richelieu and Desbordes 2009; Richelieu 2012) claimed that sports teams can become global brands in the process of internationalisation, and proposed a number of strategies that they can employ to reach the global team brand stage of development. The researchers made a reservation that sports teams turn into global entities only when they have potential that allows them to. As a result, only a limited number of sports teams can be described as truly global sports team brands (Richelieu and Pons 2006).

As mentioned in section 1.3 Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet (2013) identified three main categories of sports brands – classical brands; certification and label brands; and sport-specific brands (including club brands). When this classification is applied to global sports brands it becomes clear that brands of such sports entities as Barcelona FC or Chicago Bulls represent one of several categories under the main category of global sport brands.

Rein, Kotler and Shields (2006) in a quoted earlier definition described a sports brand as ‘... a synthesis of facts and images that comprise a sports product and is often defined by slogans, themes, positions, symbols, product characteristics, and a number of other tangible and intangible attributes’ (2006: 97). The sports product differs depending on a sports brand category and it could be a sports association, league, athlete etc. According to Tapp (2004b), ‘A sports brand may be the club, the team as a whole, or individuals’ (2004b: 407). For instance a brand of Barcelona FC or Chicago Bulls is understood as a ‘complete set of images associated with [Barcelona FC or Chicago Bulls] in the mind of the supporter. The stronger and more numerous the images are, the stronger the link’ (Tapp 2004b: 407).

A sports team brand is defined ‘by its history, its championships, its players, its venue, and even its fans’ (Cimperman 2007). The elements incorporated in this definition overlap with the most common associations that, according to past research, fans link to sports teams and that compose team brands, i.e. brand logo and visuals, successful sporting history and tradition, former and current players, coaches, style of play, and – in some cases – mythical sports stadiums (Chanavat and Bodet 2009; Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013; Mullin, Hardy and Sutton 2014; Charumbira 2016). The associations that global sports team brands generate among their fans are usually strong and favourable (Charumbira 2016). When they operate well they lead to the brand’s strength (Kase et al. 2007). Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that branding strategies of successful professional teams rely among others on their history, identity and values (Richelieu and Pons 2006; Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008; Richelieu and Desbordes 2009; Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013). A sports team brand starts with a competitive product (i.e. team) (Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008; Richelieu 2013). The team product is characterised by unique tangible dimensions (e.g. game results, website, interaction with players, merchandising) and intangible benefits (emotions experienced by fans at the stadium or through the interaction with fellow supporters) (Richelieu and Boulaire 2005; Richelieu and Desbordes 2009; Richelieu 2013). Those tangible and intangible dimensions compose the core sports product and its auxiliary features (Richelieu 2013) (Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Core sports product and its auxiliary features
Source: adapted from Richelieu (2013: 407)



Based on the abovementioned research this study employs a concept of sports team brand (strictly speaking a global sports team brand) with a sports team as a core product comprising such elements as: logo, team's past and current sports success, players, venue, identity, etc.

When defining a sports team brand one reservation should be made. In some sports disciplines, for instance in football or basketball two terms are used – a sports team and a sports club – that may not mean the same. The former is narrower and the latter additionally includes organisational elements. A sports club can be defined as 'the organisational entity, which can be privately or publicly (membership based) owned and exists to satisfy the needs and wants of its members/fans ... The club's management and organisational structure exist to support the team in its endeavours' (Meir 2009: 26, 28). In sports marketing research, however, both terms are often used interchangeably (e.g. Richelieu and Boulaire 2005; Chadwick 2007; Schlesinger 2013; Richelieu 2013) without the direct specification of the definitional borders of concept. Similarly fans when talking about such global brands as the abovementioned Barcelona FC and Chicago Bulls use both terms 'team' and 'club'.

Brands of global sports teams distinguish themselves from other global sports brands. Their distinctive character means that their potential and opportunities faced differ too (Richelieu 2012: 31). Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet (2013) claimed that these brands are sport-specific and are not found in other industries; they differ in this aspect from other sports brands (e.g. celebrity brands, corporate brands or e-brands to name only a few) which correspond to brands from non-sports sectors. Furthermore, compared to other sports brands, sports team brands' strength and capabilities lie in that their performance is elevated to myths and their athletes to the status of heroes (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013). Sports team brands are particularly good at providing fans with the opportunity to escape from reality and at conveying symbolic meaning that allows fans who associate with them to enhance their self-concept (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013). Finally, what is unique about most successful sports team brands is that they often position themselves as sports and lifestyle brands (Richelieu 2012). This helps them to reach both fans and non-fans, and facilitates their global expansion.

The awareness of how distinctive global sports team brands are from other global sports brands allows choosing the most appropriate marketing/branding strategy based on the characteristic features of this type of global sports brand. It facilitates understanding how they should communicate with fans on a global basis, how to position them best, and what strategies to undertake in order to fulfil their international expansion plans. A wealth of benefits a global sports team brand can offer to its fans (that exceed sporting results) enables it to build and capitalise on its fans' support which exceeds geographical boundaries (Richelieu and Boulaire 2005).

2.3. Contemporary sports fans

The phenomenon of globalisation has also left its mark on sports fans. Fans, undoubtedly a very important part of the sports landscape, are influenced by the changes taking place in the

contemporary sports industry. Commercialisation, new media technologies, and the 'shrinking' of the globalised world – to mention just a few of the processes shaping contemporary sport – determine the nature of fans' daily contact with sport, their relationship with their favourite sports brands and what they expect from them. Today's sports fans pose quite a challenge to marketers responsible for managing sports branding, as understanding them is essential for commercial brand success.

Contemporary sports fans have a range of choices, as novel forms of entertainment are continually made available – both sports entertainment, such as newly-popular disciplines including mixed-martial arts and extreme sports, and non-sports entertainment, such as films, concerts, TV series, shopping centres, etc. In this situation, the contemporary fan has a wide variety of avenues in which to spend his or her money. This may go some way in explaining why the contemporary sports fan is ever more demanding, even to the point of being 'spoiled' (Billings 2009). 'It is no longer reasonable to expect fans to automatically appear because they either have nothing to do or they are so addicted to the sport that they will put up with backless seats and rude ticket takers', wrote Rein, Kotler and Shields (2006: 13). With such a wide sports offering, the fan can easily switch from one option to another in search of the optimal sports service or product that will fully meet his or her needs. The contemporary sports fan is extremely busy, and the amount of time that he or she can devote to entertainment each day is limited (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006). Taking all the above issues into account, it is extremely difficult to reach the contemporary fan with one's brand. It has to really catch his or her attention, so he or she can distinguish it from the tangle of the available options and subsequently decide whether it is interesting or not.

Rein, Kotler and Shields (2006) describe today's generation of sports fans as the 'Highlight Generation'. This term refers to the way in which sports information is delivered to the contemporary fan – that is, as much information as possible in as little time as possible. As a result, information becomes extensively compressed. Evidently, people have got used to this way of providing sports information, as the media 'have turned to the highlight capsule' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 42). On the other hand, sports fans have currently at their disposal many more media channels than in the past, when the traditional media (print media, radio, and television) alone used to fulfil fans' information needs. As a result, 'It's not uncommon for a sports fan to access as many as eight different distribution channels in one day to receive and view sports information' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 49). As has already been examined in this work, this has come about mainly due to online media, which have revolutionised the sports industry. In this world of information overload, the contemporary sports fan usually copes well, as he or she has acquired the 'ability to manage the different information sources and formats at the same time' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 42).

The availability of sports information from various media sources has given the modern-day fan ever increasing means in which to express his or her fandom. As Rein, Kotler and Shields wrote, 'Satellite radio and television, the Internet, cell phones, and video games all have changed the sports experience to make it more global, mobile, and personalized' (2006: 44). The personalised media allow a fan to capture the particular information that he or she finds most interesting, such as information about his or her favourite sports team, via various media channels. Although modern

media have made fans' lives very comfortable, technology may simultaneously be isolating them from the outside world. For example, even if a fan has the opportunity to watch the favourite team's game live, he or she prefers to stay at home to experience via modern media, in a manner that would not be possible at the stadium. As Rein, Kotler and Shields (2006: 13) wrote, 'Television sports have upgraded their product to attract an ever more demanding sports fan, and, coupled with the new large-screen technology, the TV experience is more of a threat to attendance than ever'. Therefore, sports venues are continually searching for ways to withstand competition from the media and to encourage fans to experience sports events in person, rather than from the comfort of their sitting rooms. Sports venues have become 'all-inclusive experience centres' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 48), where sport remains the focus, but where high-tech entertainment, food and drink are on offer, and no longer an afterthought. Additionally, fans often become active co-producers of a sports event, contributing to the creation of the event's atmosphere. The contemporary sports experience has a broad meaning: fans consume sports content not only during sports events, but also after they have ended, and not only during the relevant sports season, but also throughout the year. This comes down to the changing nature of sport as a product, and how the most committed fans have incorporated it into their lives. Richelieu and Boulaire noticed that '[Fans] want to live a memorable experience, develop social ties, co-produce their own experience and are inclined to enter a universe of consumption which transcends the product or service itself' (2005: 32).

Trenberth and Garland (2007) captured the essence of the recent changes in the world of the sports fan by asking who he or she is in the days of globalisation. And this is the answer they gave: 'Traditionally it was the live spectator, now greatly outnumbered by the television viewer' (2007: 84). It seems that it would be appropriate to add to this description the online media users, who, in addition to the television viewers, forms another prevalent demographic of sports fans. In other words, the global availability and accessibility of sports spectacles means that their reception is not limited only to those present in the stadium. The world of sport is shrinking, and everything there is to know about the best teams and athletes, and the rivalries between them, is available to sports fans worldwide, leading to growth in the numbers of fans and fan communities worldwide. Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet emphasised that the phenomenon of emerging sports fan communities usually involves fans of foreign-based teams: 'These communities do not have geographical boundaries, due to the globalisation of communication and goods. This is typically the case for professional leagues and [teams] who now have massive communities of satellite fans' (2013: 95). Nowadays the community of fans of a particular sports team is limited not only to those who live in the team's home city, and not even to those in the team's home country. In the case of the world's most popular sports franchises, it is not rare that the number of international fans exceeds the number of domestic fans.

'Satellite' (the term coined by Kerr and Gladden 2008) or 'long-distance' fans 'come together in different regions to consume a team from afar' (Lock and Funk 2016: 89). It may seem that geographic distance makes supporting a particular team more difficult for overseas fans. Indeed, most fans of foreign-based teams are limited in terms of their opportunity to watch their favourite teams live. A substitute in the form of a televised game is less a consequence of choice than of necessity (Kerr and

Gladden 2008). Long-distance support is necessarily more media-dependent than support for a local team (Hognestad 2006). Meanwhile, in spite of all these difficulties, fans of foreign-based teams prove that they are highly committed (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016); although, as Hognestad noticed, 'Generally long distance fans have to legitimate themselves as fans in ways which local fans who were 'born' into the [team] are rarely asked to do in ethical fan discourses' (2006: 455). They live their favourite brand as they engage with the team's brand and other fans throughout the year, even outside of the season (Kerr and Emery 2011). For sports fans, the psychological benefits of supporting a foreign team are considerable, despite the opinion of some researchers that it does not provide the same benefits as supporting a domestic team (Wann et al. 2004; Wann and Pierce 2005; Wann 2006a). Although long-distance fans are dispersed, it turns out that their sense of belonging and sense of community are fulfilled, mainly due to global television broadcasts of their teams' games, as well as the latest interactive means of communication (Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Kerr 2009a; Lock and Funk 2016), which decrease the feeling of geographical distance by facilitating interaction. The so-called 'third place' – virtual or physical – also plays a role here (Kerr and Emery 2016), compensating for one's inability to be at the stadium with other fans of the team. Thanks to various platforms established by sports teams in the virtual world (e.g. social media channels controlled by them) and to informal discussion forums created by fans themselves, overseas fans feel they belong to a community of people with whom they share the same passion and interests, and with whom they can easily engage. In some circles of satellite fans, it is quite common to arrange in-person meetings in order to connect with fans of the same franchise. For example, Scandinavian fans of the English Premier League teams often meet with other likeminded fans in pubs or in their homes and watch their favourite team's matches, helping to maintain their interest in the team (Hognestad 2006; Kerr and Emery 2011).

Being a part of a community of satellite fans does not only satisfies its members' sense of belonging and sense of community, but also helps deal with the uncomfortable side of fandom – when your favourite team loses. Even without the company of fellow fans, satellite fans may be pleased with their team's victory, as in this situation they feel as if they were also winners (BIRG, i.e. Basking In Reflected Glory mechanism explains this phenomenon – Cialdini et al. 1976). However, the team's failure is more difficult to cope with on one's own. There is an anxiety that satellite fans may distance themselves from the losing team by employing the CORF (Cutting Off Reflected Failure) mechanism (Cialdini et al. 1976; Kerr and Gladden 2008) if likeminded fans do not accompany them – even virtually – through this hard time. Nevertheless, in the era of interactive communication when one's favourite team and fellow fans are 'a click away', the potential drawbacks associated with satellite fandom as compared with local fandom are eliminated, and overseas fans will evermore try to further strengthen their relationship with fellow members of their favourite international sports brand community.

2.4. Antecedents of strong global team brands in managerial and fan research

Past research indicates different resource determinants for the creation of a sports team's status. Some studies describe the specific character of a sports product as being responsible for a brand's position. An example is Chadwick (2006: 153), who wrote that:

Sports products are socially and culturally embedded and generate a degree of fervour unmatched by any other types of products ... Unlike other products, sport is often consumed in an irrational way. Logic tells us that if a product continually fails to live up to expectations, people will stop buying it. In sport, this logic does not always hold.

The sports product understood as a sports event incorporates both tangible (facilities, players) and intangible (spectator experience, services offered, etc.) elements and can be considered to have a multi-layer structure (basic, real and total product) (Sullivan 2004: 141). Therefore, it is judged by each fan in a unique way. Moreover, it is short-lived and its process of production and consumption overlap (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Richelieu and Pons 2006).

Therefore, the process of creating a sports brand differs to some extent from building non-sports brands, which Milligan (2009: 234) emphasised: 'When building a brand for a player, a club an event or an organisation, one is dealing with something "sacred" and managing a piece of community property, not a business asset'.

According to Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet (2013), the inherent features of sports brands differentiate them from non-sports brands and are a source of their strength. Compared to non-sports brands that are strongly context dependent, sports brands are cross-functional. This makes it easy for them to transcend the everyday life of their fans and even become part of the fans' philosophy of life. Besides, sports brands convey 'values that most non-sport brands fail to symbolise' (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013: 3). This means that they are not only symbols of entertainment but also transmit deeper ideas such as teamwork, loyalty, authenticity etc. that appeal to people coming from different cultural, national and social backgrounds. Sports brands exceed pure consumerism.

Apart from the nature of the product, Richelieu and Pons (2006: 242) have mentioned a team's 'longevity and historical components' as being other factors in the worldwide appeal of a sports team. Others have also included on-field success as a determinant, although they usually do not consider it as being decisive (e.g. Hill and Vincent 2006). Richelieu and Desbordes (2009) indicated an efficient system of communication with fans (consisting of online and offline team media channels) and a strong community involvement as the key factors in sports team brands internationalisation.

Much of the work published has seen the influence of marketers as being the crucial factor in the development of a sports team brand's status. This view is in line with Giulianotti's (1999: 88):

Towards the end of the 1980s most professional clubs in the UK were aiming to earn more money from their off-field activities than from gate money paid by the average [fan] ... To improve off-field earnings, club directors introduced an extra tier of business management and created marketing departments.

Similarly, Hill and Vincent (2006: 228) recognised management as a 'critical resource' for the global reputation of Manchester United. They came to this conclusion having analysed how the Old Trafford team has built and leveraged its brand marketing capabilities.

Research inside and outside sports studies suggests that marketers often create brand status by developing its equity. This was illustrated by Guenzi and Nocco's case study (2006), which examined the launch of the Italian soccer team U.S. Lecce's brand using a modified version of Aaker's brand equity model. Another example is Richelieu and Pons' study (2006) of how brand equity was built by the football team FC Barcelona and the hockey team Toronto Maple Leafs. The comparison of the approaches of both teams to building brand equity demonstrated that their top positions in different disciplines have originated from the 'common attributes of powerful sports brands' (sport success, longevity, tradition, powerful fan base) and differences in their positioning and identity. 'Shared attributes are not enough to build a successful brand ... the two teams have to adopt a different positioning: they can define their identity by highlighting their differences outside or inside the sports scene' (Richelieu and Pons 2006: 242).

Brand identity, one of the elements of brand equity, is, in the researcher's opinion, one of the key determinants of a sports team's brand position. Identity – in Aaker's words, 'the timeless essence of the brand' – is 'a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for' (Aaker 1996: 68). Within sports studies, Aaker's concept of brand identity was used by Hill and Vincent (2006) to identify the driving forces of Manchester United's globalisation. They described brand identity as a brand's intangible asset (2006: 218).

The importance of the brand identity construct is reflected in academic research. It is very often considered to be a key to building powerful brands. For instance, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000: 40) noted that 'Brand identity ... is one of the four pillars (along with the brand architecture, brand building programmes, and organizational structure and processes) of creating strong brands'. What is more, it is crucial for the overall performance of a brand, as it is 'the vehicle that guides and inspires the brand-building program' (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000: 27). 'If the brand identity is confused or ambiguous, there is little chance that effective brand building will occur', they concluded (2000: 27).

Kapferer also pointed to brand identity as a crucial determinant of brand position: 'To become a power brand and to remain so, a brand has a duty to be faithful to its identity' (1992: 37). He (1992: 37) even suggested that the world has currently entered into the brand identity era (after the era of brand image, positioning and personality).

Following much the same line, Leslie de Chernatony noted that brand identity is responsible for the strength and uniqueness of a brand. According to her, 'stronger brands result from a homogeneous brand identity, with congruent identity components' (de Chernatony 1999: 157) and the identity 'is about the ethos, aims and values that present a sense of individuality differentiating the brand' (1999: 165).

The importance of brand identity is also illustrated with a Porter's equation for calculating successful brands. In this formula the distinctive identity is one of the variables (the two others are an effective product and added value) which maximise the success of a brand (Melewar and Walker 2003: 157). This equation was used by Melewar and Walker to examine the key factors for the prosperity of global brands, among which brand identity plays a major role. In the opinion of researchers:

A unique and differentiated identity that evokes the brand's essence, individuality and values in each market will help make the brand memorable and readily recognised. It will help ... understand what that company stands for, its aims and values, and what they might experience from that brand (2003: 158).

Melewar and Walker (2003) also noted that brand identity can bring long-term benefits to companies.

The literature dealing with sports teams from the fan perspective, i.e. fans' attraction and motives that affect sports fans' behaviour, is diverse, which demonstrates how complex fan behaviour is. The majority of the research focuses on the psychological motives behind fan interest in sport such as excitement, aggression, vicarious achievement, self-esteem, escape, socialisation, drama, aesthetics, stress release and affiliation (Wann 1995; Milne and McDonald 1999; Trail and James 2001; Funk et al. 2001; James et al. 2006). Control over those motives by sports team management is limited, as they cannot be easily manipulated. What can be influenced – to a greater or lesser extent – are the sports teams' characteristics. They decide how a team's brand is perceived by fans and they affect the fans' choice of one team over another. A range of those team-related motives presented in the literature is significant, to mention only a few examples: players, team success, team play characteristics or history/tradition. The most important factors responsible for fan interest in sports teams were outlined in section 1.4 of this chapter.

While the aforementioned studies can provide some insight into understanding the way in which team brands grow and develop in the eyes of their fans, they do not specifically concern the brands of strong global sports teams. They do analyse team-related characteristics, which is helpful, but only relative to local or domestic teams. They do not, however, examine the relationship of fans of foreign-based teams with those teams, whereas there is a necessity to differentiate between local and overseas fans of the same team (Kerr and Gladden 2008). According to Kerr and Emery, 'These [overseas fans] do not benefit from geographic proximity as they do not live, nor grow up, close to their favourite team and so other drivers must be responsible for their support for a foreign-based team' (2016: 513–514).

What characteristics of global sports team brands attract their fans – the abovementioned fan research does not give a right answer to this question. In this situation valuable information about the process of sports team brand development that could be applied to global brands is provided by works concerning an emotional bond between sports team brands and their overseas fans. This stems from the fact that very often those teams whose fan base exceeds their traditional area of influence and that have the potential to attract the attention of overseas fans are perceived as strong and even international brands. Although in theory it is possible for any sports team to have such 'satellite fans' (Kerr and Gladden 2008), it is obvious that most overseas fans are interested in the endeavours of

teams with international and worldwide appeal. A global brand in particular attracts the attention of numerous fans in various countries and gets enormous recognition – otherwise it would not be considered global. The research strand covering studies examining the attitude of satellite fans towards foreign-based teams has received relatively little attention in the past. However, as recent years show, it is under steady development.

A starting point for some works that study the relationship between satellite fans and their favourite overseas teams is the brand equity concept – as in the case of earlier discussed research showing the managerial perspective on global team brands. The already mentioned Kerr and Gladden tried to explain ‘how brand equity is created in the eyes of satellite fans’ (2008: 74), across geographic boundaries. The authors claimed that the most important antecedents of brand equity among satellite fans are success, star player and head coach (known as team-related antecedents); conference/league, stadium/arena, sponsor alignment, reputation and tradition (composing a set of organisation-related factors); and finally geographic location, competitive forces, existing brand community and international media arrangements (labelled as market-related antecedents, concerning the external context in which a team brand operates). Kerr and Gladden (2008) suggested that the factors shaping brand equity perceived by a team’s overseas fans differ from those that matter to its domestic fans. The researchers built their model based on existing frameworks of team brand equity in North American sport: Division I college athletics (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998) and professional sports teams (Gladden and Milne 1999). The former is a conceptual work; the latter was developed based on the documentation and financial data concerning professional teams. The comparison of the global team brand equity model (2008) with the two prior conceptualisations of brand equity demonstrates that head coach, reputation and tradition and international media arrangements are the only antecedents of brand equity that were not modified by Kerr and Gladden (2008), because their impact remains the same – whether or not a brand operates in the global marketplace. The influence of the remaining antecedents is specific if one takes into consideration the relationship of a global team with its overseas fans. Kerr and Gladden’s research is conceptual and its findings concerning team brand equity, perceived from the perspective of satellite fans, are not set in a particular context.

Bodet and Chanavat went a step further in their empirical research when they dealt with specific features of brand equity and typical perceptions of French (2009) and Chinese (2010) fans towards top English Premier League brands (the so-called ‘Big Four’), i.e. Arsenal FC, Chelsea FC, Liverpool FC and Manchester United. In their first work Chanavat and Bodet (2009) explored how the brand equity of those teams is perceived by French football fans. The paper established common and specific features influencing each team’s brand equity that make those four brands unique to French fans. One of the features is members of the teams – either players or managers who are popular in their home country, and ideally have sports star status. Their image and the image of the team they represent must also fit. Additionally, French fans evaluated the English teams through the lens of sports success (it was emphasised that ‘All four clubs may reasonably be considered successful ...’ (2009: 475)) and the ‘business dimension’ that covers the non-sports activity of all four teams. The

latter does not mean only that a team possesses financial resources, but also that it is capable of long-term planning of the brand management strategy, in the execution of which money can only help.

On the other hand, a similar study concerning the perceived brand equity of the same four football teams among Chinese fans (Bodet and Chanavat 2010) showed that the strength of their brands in the Chinese market results from high brand awareness, perceived quality and brand attributes such as star players and managers. Other components of brand equity – brand loyalty and brand image – are weaker and depend on the role of players who, however, ‘do not represent long-term assets for the brands’ (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 64). According to the researchers, brand loyalty and image are to help team brands to reach competitive advantage. Therefore, it is crucial to focus more on strategic marketing and less on operational marketing, especially when team marketing performance is ‘recognised [by Chinese fans] as a strong factor of success’ (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 63).

The works of Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) are two of the first where the researchers examined sports team brands with international if not global appeal. The reservation should be made, however, that the wealth of qualitative analysis Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) carried out did not entitle them to generalise based on data collected only from the interviews they conducted with fans. Having said that, these studies of Chinese and French fans’ perceptions are an important step in exploring the perceptions of ‘satellite fans’ towards international team brands. Especially characteristic is the prevalence of the ‘players’ factor in the fans’ perceptions concerning the ‘Big Four’ teams. It comes as no surprise since ‘The role of the star player is arguably of paramount importance to building brand equity across boundaries’ (Kerr and Gladden 2008: 64). A vital antecedent is also a head coach, another member of personnel important for how the team operates. Fans are also attracted by spectacular sports results of foreign-based teams; often this is athletic success that is taken into account to assess a team’s value. This means that teams winning on the field that, in addition, have successful star players in their squads usually cannot be missed by fans, including those from abroad. It is probably because ‘successful teams and successful players have greater differential advantage and create stronger brands’ (Bridgewater 2007: 453). Finally, the satellite fans who participated in the studies of Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) not only paid attention to the purely sports activities of the ‘Big Four’ teams but were also aware of, and able to evaluate, the teams’ activities within the management field. This was expressed in the fans’ perceptions – positive and negative – of the actions of the EPL teams articulated in both studies in regard to planning and executing their business strategies and marketing performance.

Apart from the above works investigating satellite fans’ perceptions of the equities of sports team brands with an international reach, important information about such brands brought studies designed to foster better understanding of why overseas fans support their favourite foreign-based teams (Hognestad 2006; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). The researchers gave consideration both to the reasons linked to team characteristics and to the causes found in the psychological sphere.

This is evident from the study by Hognestad (2006) who demonstrated that fans of the EPL teams from Norway, in particular members of fan clubs, developed their support mainly under the influence of live television coverage of the Premier League games available in their country. Specifically, those fans (labelled by the author as 'long distance supporters') mentioned the live Saturday games broadcasting on Norwegian TV known as 'Tippekampen'. A significant number of fans connected their support to aesthetic factors covering 'the design and colours of the club strip or the name of the club' (Hognestad 2006: 445), next to very personal motives defined in the study as 'other reasons', unique for each fan. For instance, a Nottingham Forest fan started to support this team because of the legend of Robin Hood, which he found particularly appealing. Less significant turned out to be motives such as particular player(s) and the image of the team brand, which, according to other works, are the key elements for fan-based team brand equity. Interestingly, the most prominent drivers determining sustained interest of Norwegian fans in English football differ slightly from those accountable for the origins of support. Here television still plays an important although not the key role whereas fan club membership is a crucial factor.

The results of Hognestad's (2006) study were derived from survey data, which – unlike in the case of the works of Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) – allowed the researcher to generalise from his findings to larger populations of fans. However, it cannot be assumed that they can be fully applied to global team brands, despite the fact that Hognestad's paper examines support for the EPL teams, one of the most popular football leagues in the world. The respondents answered the survey questions with respect to the EPL team they support. Although some of them chose global football brands – Manchester United serves here as the best example – among the study participants there were also fans of teams from the bottom of the League, with much weaker, non-global positions.

Satellite fans' identification with foreign-based football teams was at the centre of studies by Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) who explored foreign fandom of Ajax and Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) who examined overseas fans of Liverpool. Both teams are recognised as international and, by many, even global brands. Nevertheless, all three works are case studies of single teams, so it is not clear to what extent their conclusions are applicable to other international sports team brands. Owing to their employment of a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) approach in examining the two cases of football teams, at least in regard to Liverpool and Ajax the researchers managed to obtain a holistic picture of the reasons for the satellite fans' support.

Those studies demonstrated that the main reasons for support for Ajax from American fans and for Liverpool from its global fandom are to much a degree alike. The data collected from the representatives of the English team's fan clubs from 32 countries indicate that the first three motives for their support are media coverage, style of play and presence of particular player(s) within the squad. Team success, history of success, participation in the highest division and the stadium were also listed among the primary antecedents in Liverpool's identification. On the other hand, reputation/tradition, players, team success and media coverage mostly affect Ajax fans. It follows that three out of four of the most crucial factors for fans of both teams are the same, but both groups put a

slightly different emphasis on them. This is the case with, for example, the first, most influential motive. Most of the respondents (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016) became Liverpool fans because information about it was often available on the media they had access to. Television coverage was also the key reason for Norwegian fans' support of Premier League teams in the aforementioned work of Hognestad (2006). It is not a coincidence, because 'Generations of Scandinavians developed a passion for the Liverpool brand as a result of being able to watch the team play in the media ...' (Kerr and Emery 2016: 522). Frequent appearances of their favourite team on television is an important factor for American Ajax fans too; however, only the fourth in order. In their opinion, in turn, it is the 'reputation and/or tradition' that is crucial. It covers the team's style of play, history of success and ethical behaviour, hence those elements that have minor significance for the Liverpool overseas fandom.

Kerr and Emery (2011) noticed that the antecedents in identification with Liverpool FC can be grouped around factors similar to those found in other studies. 'Many of these factors reflect categories found in models designed to examine brand equity and professional sport teams' (2011: 884), the researchers claimed. Kerr (2009b) suggested that both constructs – team identification and fan-based team brand equity – are related to each other. Indeed, it is enough to compare the above antecedents with the previously discussed conceptual model of Kerr and Gladden (2008) demonstrating how brand equity is formed from the fans' perspective. Moreover, comparing particular factors affecting brand equity perceived from the satellite fans' perspective in the studies of Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) with motives for supporting foreign-based teams from the works of Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) and Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) allows certain similarities to be seen. All these studies have two factors in common – players and sporting success. According to French and Chinese fans, these are the key elements influencing the brand equity of Liverpool, Chelsea, Manchester United and Arsenal in the foreign market. They were also among the most popular motives behind the satellite fans' decision to support Liverpool and Ajax. In this context the list of origins of support differs slightly from the work of Hognestad (2006). The 'players' factor, in the opinion of the majority of Norwegian fans, was not crucial to their decision as to which EPL team to support. Some fans were either unaffected by the influx of Norwegian footballers to their favourite EPL teams, suggesting that national identity is unimportant, or saw their presence within the EPL as 'an undesired aspect of the game in England' (2006: 455). As far as athletic success is concerned, fans who participated in Hognestad's study did not mention it among the factors determining both the origins and the maintenance of support, which means that they stay with their favourite teams for better or worse.

2.5. How does a sports team benefit from having a global brand?

A strong brand is vital for any company competing in the free market. Having a successful brand takes on special significance in the global market where a successful brand strategy may be a significant factor in ensuring competitive superiority within that market. Despite this simple truth, the literature dealing with the benefits that sports teams receive owing to possessing a global brand remains an

underdeveloped field in need of further investigation. Compared with the literature focusing on the factors that contribute to the global appeal and strength of sports team brands (discussed in the previous section), which attempts to show two perspectives – managerial and fans’ – research on the consequences of a global sports team brand is much more limited and scarce.

Most researchers exploring the benefits that sports teams gain from their fans centre on the relationship of the team with its domestic or local fans. Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt (2005) proved that fan-based brand equity has a positive effect on the economic success of Bundesliga teams, measured by purchase intentions, price premium and the brand loyalty of German fans. According to a conceptual study by Ross (2006), Spectator-Based Brand Equity (SBBE) leads to the following outcomes: team loyalty, media exposure, merchandise sales, ticket sales and revenue solicitation. Similar behaviours have been observed by researchers exploring the phenomenon of identification with a sports team. Highly identified fans attend games of their teams or watch them on media, and purchase the teams’ and their sponsors’ products (e.g. Wakefield 2007; Richelieu 2013). Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) and Gladden and Milne (1999) showed that, in regard to college athletics and professional teams operating in the domestic market, team brand equity may lead to increased revenue from various sources, e.g. sales of team products, media exposure, corporate support, atmosphere, ticket sales and individual donations.

However, as emphasised by Kerr and Gladden (2008), a sports team brand operating on a global scale differs from one present only on the domestic market. For this reason, the literature on local or domestic team brands cannot answer one of the research questions posed in this work, i.e. what consequences for a sports team result from having a global brand status and being recognised all over the world?

Research discussed in the previous section provides some vital information about the antecedents of globally recognised sports team brands, but out of those works only Kerr and Gladden (2008), Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011), Kerr and Emery (2011) and Kerr and Emery (2016) discussed the consequences of a global sports team brand.

As mentioned earlier, Kerr and Gladden (2008) adopted the model of the consequences (and antecedents) of a team brand operating in the global marketplace from the framework of brand equity used in college athletics and professional settings (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999). Gladden and Milne (1999), based on secondary data from all teams competing in the MLB (Major League Baseball), the NBA (National Basketball Association) and the NHL (National Hockey League), indicated seven consequences of team brand equity: national media exposure, merchandise sales, corporate support, atmosphere, ticket sales and additional revenues which cover marketing extensions (e.g. team-owned or licensed restaurants, merchandise stores, practice facilities). This model is an extension of previous work by Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998). Having argued that both existing conceptual frameworks do not take into account the specific nature of global sports team brands, Kerr and Gladden built a new model for the brand equity of sports teams operating within the globalised market, including in it the following ‘consequences of attaining brand

equity among satellite fans' (2008: 62): international media exposure, merchandise sales, ticket sales, global corporate partners and additional revenues. The authors suggested that some consequences of professional team brand equity developed in the worldwide marketplace are unique and that some of those included in Gladden and Milne's (1999) model take on a slightly different meaning when considering satellite fans.

Hence, according to Kerr and Gladden (2008), one of the consequences of the development of global team brand equity is team brand presence in international media. This indicates that the influence of global teams exceeds their domestic market. Their publicity is not limited only to national media, as it is in the case of teams that do not have global brand status (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999). A brand's international media presence means global fan recognition. This is why global sports team brands attract from other sectors both global brands operating on the international market and regional brands from local markets the sports teams want to enter – non-sports brands use sports brands as a vehicle to promote their products among fans of the sports team. On the other hand, an agreement with a global business partner allows a sports team to gain access to a potential international fan base comprising those who acquire the business partner's products. So there is a mutual benefit for both parties. For instance, recently German football team Borussia Dortmund completed a regional partnership with Bruderer, a Swiss stamping technology company (Soccerex 2016). The latter has been present in Japan and Singapore for over 20 years and in China for 10 years. Borussia, on the other hand, opened its Asian branch in Singapore last year. These two businesses intend to cooperate to help promote their brands in China, Japan and Singapore. Entities such as Bruderer become global corporate partners of global teams and take on a sponsor's role, thus increasing teams' revenues. Business partnerships on that scale and benefits resulting from them are not within the reach of those team brands that limit their operations to their domestic market.

Apparently, ticket sales is the team brand equity consequence that differs most in terms of importance and intensity when Kerr and Gladden's (2008) model is compared with the other two. Satellite fans – for natural reasons – purchase tickets to matches of their teams more rarely than domestic fans, as they are 'for the most part limited in their ability to witness their heroes perform in person' (Kerr and Gladden 2008: 72). This does not mean that overseas fan bases do not contribute to ticket sales revenues of their teams; merely that owing to geographic distance only a small group of satellite fans can afford to attend their favourite team's games. This is the case especially with fans in those countries where many international teams organise pre-season exhibition tours. The main aim of international tours of popular sports teams is to promote and expand their market (Barajas and Urrutia 2007). '[Teams] are not just competing on the pitch ... they are also competing to build an online presence throughout the year' (Duggan 2015). This is a long-term benefit for the team and ticket sales revenue is usually an added value.

Merchandise sales and additional revenues are two consequences that appear in team brand equity models (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999; Kerr and Gladden 2008) but in the overseas markets – to a greater extent than in the domestic markets – their role in building team brand awareness takes on particular significance: 'Satellite fans continue to promote the team brand as they

wear their [fan]'s gear, thus enhancing brand awareness in those markets' (Kerr and Gladden 2008: 72). Taking into consideration that most global and international sports teams are considered strong brands in some foreign markets owing to the high level of brand awareness (Bodet and Chanavat 2010), any activities leading to increased brand awareness are profitable to those teams. For example, it is because of its strong brand equity that in the 2015/2016 season Chelsea (not Manchester United) – despite a lack of major athletic success – was the leader among English teams in terms of global shirt sales and the third behind Barcelona and Bayern Munich (Whaling 2016). In addition, well-thought-out brand extensions that fit the parent brand strengthen the brand associations (Aaker 1991) and 'generate profits for the brand in the form of market share' (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou and Loukas 2004: 33). 'Manchester United has successfully pursued this strategy, leveraging its strong international brand equity into various lucrative opportunities' (Kerr and Gladden 2008: 73) by introducing a range of brand extensions and offering anything from football accessories to bed furniture, watches, videos and games, and debit and credit cards (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013).

As stated in the previous section, Kerr and Gladden's (2008) paper is conceptual. This means that the authors did not test their framework in the sports environment and that they did not verify in practice what the outcomes are of team brand equity relative to 'satellite fans'. Fan bases of global sports teams grow and often the majority are based outside the original area of team influence (i.e. the team's domestic market). Kerr and Gladden (2008) noticed that patterns of consumption of sports products, which are the way global fans express their feelings towards their favourite teams, are rather characteristic. Those consumption behaviours are followed by specific benefits – also financial – that a team brand achieves owing to its global fans' support. The relationship is quite straightforward: the more fans a team has, the greater the potential to increase its revenue and brand value (Kerr 2009b: 235). The consumption behaviours of football and basketball teams' satellite fans were explored in the papers of Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) and Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) mentioned above and in the work of Menefee and Casper (2011).

Studying the consumption involvement of Liverpool FC's overseas fans, Kerr and Emery indirectly answered the question about the profits they provide to the team's brand. The data gathered from members of Liverpool fan clubs from 32 countries (Kerr and Emery 2011), including members of the Scandinavian fan club (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016), demonstrated that the most popular ways of brand consumption among highly identified Liverpool fans are linked to consuming available media content – both traditional and electronic – about the team. More than 80 per cent of respondents in both of Kerr and Emery's papers (2011, 2016) once a week watched Liverpool games on television and with the same frequency visited an official team website and other non-official team sites managed by its fans. A particularly significant group of fans (above 50 per cent) each week watched video highlights of Liverpool games online and '[got] together with other LFC fans' (Kerr and Emery 2011: 889) – in reality (e.g. in a pub or at home with fellow fans watching a Liverpool game) or virtually (participation in online forums for the team's fans). A reasonably high group of respondents (more than half of them) bought products of Liverpool sponsors – either monthly or weekly. Team merchandise was purchased at least once a season by above 90 per cent of respondents. Among other

consumption behaviours – which were, however, not so frequently observable – there was purchasing ‘additional Liverpool FC items’ (Kerr and Emery 2011: 889), shares in Liverpool FC and tickets to the team’s matches played either in the Premier League or overseas. Ticket purchase was the least common consumption activity as about 75 per cent of the whole sample in both studies never demonstrated it. As for Liverpool fans also for Ajax fans accessing team-related content on media was the most popular behaviour to support their team (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011); the difference is, however, that Ajax fans chose Internet over television more frequently. They also, not as often as Liverpool fans, used to get together with fellow fans to watch their team’s games and were less likely to purchase products of Ajax’s sponsors. Acquiring the team’s merchandise turned out to be reasonably popular – almost 80 per cent of fans declared it at least once a season (2011: 26).

Some of these consumption behaviours were discussed by Menefee and Casper (2011) in their work showing the differences in identification with foreign-based (NBA) and domestic (CBA, Chinese Basketball Association) teams among Chinese basketball fans, on the basis of team identification and behavioural involvement. The latter was measured using merchandise consumption and television viewership. It turned out that, overall, respondents in the study recruited from the spectators at CBA games identified with foreign-based basketball teams (i.e. from the NBA league) to a greater extent than domestic ones (i.e. CBA). Their behavioural involvement towards their favourite NBA teams was also greater than towards their favourite CBA teams. The survey data showed that during the season Chinese fans watched more NBA than CBA games on television (2011: 192). The frequency of the highest level of television viewership (20 games per season) was 54 per cent for NBA games (compared with 28.9 per cent for CBA games). Annually, respondents also spent more on NBA merchandise (597.82 yuan (mean)) than on CBA merchandise (367.76 yuan (mean)) (2011: 192). This study demonstrated that foreign-based teams may attract sports fans to a greater extent than domestic teams, that this has implications for the NBA teams’ revenue, and that ‘The NBA has successfully developed a large base of “satellite” (Kerr and Gladden 2008) fans that follow their favourite NBA teams without being able to attend games in person’ (2011: 195).

It is evident that the consumption behaviours resulting from identification with a favourite foreign-based team discussed by Menefee and Casper (2011) and those indicated in the studies of Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) and Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) were also included by Kerr and Gladden (2008) among the consequences of the equity of team brands operating in the global marketplace. This should not come as a surprise, because, as Kerr (2009b) claimed, there is a relationship between the consequences of team brand equity and team identification. Moreover, Kerr and Emery admitted that in their work they ‘were drawing heavily on the conceptual frameworks of Gladden and colleagues (i.e. Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999)’ (2016: 515).

The abovementioned papers proved that the discussed foreign-based teams – Liverpool FC, Ajax FC and the NBA teams – gain international media exposure (Gladden and Kerr 2008). Chinese fans actively follow the actions of their favourite NBA teams through television. Liverpool fans throughout the world have the chance to watch their team playing owing to the fact that its matches are broadcast in various countries. Besides, the Internet allows fans to be up to date 24 hours a day with news about

the team and video highlights, and to be in touch with the Liverpool fans' community. Global fans who in various countries watch their favourite team on television or use other media to access information about it are a tasty morsel for media concerns and sponsors and an important asset of each brand in their negotiations with these businesses – their potential global corporate partners (Kerr and Gladden 2008). In this way fans participate in the creation of a team's revenue streams. As demonstrated in Kerr and Emery's research (2016), those fans often acquire products from companies that sponsor Liverpool and – as they admitted – they do it intentionally. According to Kerr and Gladden (2008), further outcomes of brand equity in the global marketplace cover: merchandise and ticket sales and additional team revenues. They are also reflected in the consumption behaviours of the fans from the works of Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016), Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) and Menefee and Casper (2011). Football fans declared to purchase their teams' branded products, and – to a lesser extent – tickets to games and shares in the sports clubs. Chinese fans stated, too, that they buy their favourite basketball teams' merchandising. Taking into consideration the size of the population and the gradually increasing ability of people 'to afford entertainment and other non-essential products' (Menefee and Casper 2011: 194), the Chinese market is considered to be one of the most profitable in the world. It needs to be emphasised that the increase in revenues from team merchandise sales and team-related content available on media is a short-term benefit, but additionally it can fuel a team's durable profits. Such behavioural involvement enhances fans' engagement with the foreign-based team brand and its community (Kerr and Emery 2016).

Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011), Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) and Menefee and Casper's (2011) works – as opposed to Kerr and Gladden's research (2008) – are empirical studies and the consumption behaviours discussed there were based on real data collected from fans. It is worth noting that the first three of those works are case studies of one football team. As a result, it is a justified question whether their results would be applicable to other teams operating on the global sports market. One could wonder what results would emerge from research conducted among fans of another global football team or among fans of a global team from another sports discipline. Additionally, that data in those studies were gathered among fans who are believed to be the most loyal – members of fan clubs or visitors to the Ajax USA website. That limited a possibility to obtain a holistic picture of consumption behaviours of other fans demonstrating varied levels of team identification. While it would be interesting to explore their consumption activities, Kerr and Emery emphasised that '... these individuals are less likely to join an organized ... group and so accessing a large number of these [fans] is a challenge' (2011: 891).

Menefee and Casper's (2011) study, on the other hand, is based on data collected from fans of various NBA teams; hence it is not limited to examination of the behavioural involvement of satellite fans of a singular international team. However, this work leaves some space for further research because it concentrates only on two types of fan activity – merchandise and television consumption. The authors did not use measures of other types of consumption behaviour, and such analysis inevitably would be interesting. As with Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) and Kerr and Emery's (2011, 2016) papers, it does have some limitations concerning sampling procedures. The sample selected

may not be representative of the whole population of Chinese basketball fans. As the authors noted, fans who participated in the study were from East China, which is 'more innovative and cosmopolitan than other regions in the country (Cui and Liu, 2000)' (Menefee and Casper 2011: 197). As a result, 'Urban [fans] are more likely to afford expensive NBA merchandise and be able to watch NBA games on television' (2011: 197). Therefore, it is unclear to what extent the degree of identification with NBA teams, manifested in consumption activities among others, would be confirmed in a similar work conducted among respondents from other regions of China.

3. Conclusions

Brands are important for the commercial success of firms and organisations. A strong brand is an important asset for any enterprise as it differentiates it from its competitors and satisfies the rational and emotional needs of consumers. Brand issues also play an important role in professional sports and sports entities are often perceived and managed as brands. Global sports brands are in the contemporary sports industry its characteristic element. Among them the special attention of research and the public, in particular sports fans all over the world, attract global sports team brands. The literature exploring the factors that contribute to the global appeal and strength of these brands shows two – managerial and fans' – perspectives. When one is to look for common elements between the sets of antecedents indicated in the studies from these two research strands, undoubtedly these would be athletic success and players within the sports team – factors resulting from the specific character of a sports product. Other popular elements include marketing operations planned and executed by a team's management, and the team's identity (covering various components appearing in the available studies such as reputation and tradition, name of the team, the team's visual identity). However, it cannot be assumed that this is a complete list because the literature is still under development.

One of the conclusions from Kerr and Gladden's work (2008) sports team brand equity in the global marketplace generates a range of benefits for that brand, especially in the case of the strongest team brands, the number of satellite fans often exceeds teams' domestic fan base. In the opinion of Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes, 'Globally, strong brand equity is the quintessence of successful brand strategy development (Gladden et al, 2001) and has an impact on purchase intentions, price premiums and brand loyalty (Bauer et al 2005)' (2008: 31). According to the available works, globally dispersed sports fans contribute to their favourite team mainly through consuming information about it that is available in the media and acquiring the team's merchandise. This is particularly true for strong football teams, as football has developed globally due to its universal character. The NBA management also benefits from its international presence. The NBA team brands have found throngs of fans including such an important market as China where sports teams from various sports disciplines try to conquer in the way described by Richelieu:

With the globalisation of sport, new opportunities have been opened to Western sport organisations. Some are more aggressive than others in pursuing foreign markets: the National Basketball Association (NBA) and English soccer [teams] are good examples. With

exhibition tours including the best [teams] and players in targeted countries, these organisations have come closer to their fans, helping them crystallise the sense of belonging of their [fans] and leading to more games being watched on television and more sales of licensed products (2013: 413).

There are also other benefits that sports teams gain due to their global appeal, which has been reflected in the existing research. However, although it brings interesting findings concerning the relationship between football or basketball teams and their satellite fans it still remains underdeveloped and the topic of outcomes of having a strong global brands for a sports team requires further exploration.

Chapter III: Research methods

Overview

This chapter provides a review of the methodology employed in conducting this study. It describes each stage of the research through highlighting its objectives, used methods and key concerns. Next, a brief overview of the data-analysis techniques is presented. The chapter concludes with the evaluation of the research quality.

1. Research approach

The research aims of this work were to first build, then test and finally verify the model of the components of a fan's favourite global sports team brand and its outcomes for this team. These aims implied using various phases of research in this study.

The first exploratory stage of research was focused on understanding the phenomenon (i.e. globalisation of brands) and building the model of brand (Hair et al. 2007: 6; Sekaran and Bougie 2010: 103). This was in line with the reasons for undertaking exploratory research. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), this type of research is done 'to better comprehend the nature of the problem' and when 'more information is needed for developing a viable theoretical framework' (2010: 104). To understand the phenomenon researchers 'seek new insights' and try to 'assess phenomena in a new light' (Anderson 2009: 16). Understanding involves 'gain[ing] familiarity with the phenomenon in the situation' (Sekaran and Bougie 2010: 104). In this study the researcher investigated how the participants involved in the exploratory stage perceived the phenomenon of globalisation of sports team brands and subsequently used those perceptions to interpret its understanding from the data collected (Thanh and Thanh 2015). As far as the model building was concerned, the researcher did not start her research with formulating hypotheses but took an inductive approach posing an open-ended research question at the beginning of the research and, based on the patterns that emerged from the qualitative data, created the initial model. Hypotheses generated at that stage underwent subsequent testing (Sekaran and Bougie 2010: 104).

The brand model was tested in the next explanatory phase. Contrary to the abovementioned exploratory approach employed in the first phase of this research here the aim was the explanation (instead of understanding) of the phenomenon of global sports team brands. It came down to explaining causal relationships between the variables in the model (Anderson 2009; Ticehurst and Veal 2000; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). This approach helped to generalise from the findings and apply them to different settings. It was based on deductive reasoning, where '... the starting point is theory with subsequent testing of relevant hypotheses that leads to empirical generalizations' (Glynn 2009: 40). In order to establish causality, the researcher proceeded in a rigid and precise way

employing the numerical measurement and statistical analysis of quantitative data (Ticehurst and Veal 2000). The use of standardised measures allowed the perspectives and experiences of those participating in that phase of research to fit into predetermined categories (Patton 1990).

Finally, the third confirmatory stage of the study illuminated the quantitative findings and brought qualitative insights. This phase of research was conducted with the aim of confirming and validating (or falsifying) hypotheses. Ling (2017: 27) suggested that while quantitative findings allow the researcher to test and then refute or accept hypotheses:

...the intent can still be served and potentially enhanced with the use of a qualitative descriptive or narrative element, which adds another dimension to the findings and makes them potentially even more compelling to a broader audience.

Moreover, the qualitative insights at this stage of research enhanced the coherence of the study and validity and generalisability of the findings (Collis and Hussey 2003; Phothongsunan 2010). As advised by Phothongsunan (2010): 'The conclusions drawn from the research should be backed up by the qualitative data, so that the study is coherent. ... If the different methods reinforce the same conclusion, then validity claims are strengthened' (2010: 3). The conclusions in this work and validity and generalisability were strengthened due to triangulation defined by Denzin (2009: 297) as 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon'. It allowed the researcher to reveal various perspectives on the phenomenon of sports team brand globalisation through using various phases of research that produced various types of data: qualitative and quantitative. The next section includes the details of the data-collection process and highlights the role of methodological triangulation.

2. Methods of data collection

A mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed in the study. Both approaches complement each other (Collis and Hussey 2003; David and Sutton 2011) – they allow the researcher to obtain a multi-level perspective on the phenomenon under study (i.e. global sports team brands). The mix of approaches also helped to overcome their weaknesses – the limited reliability and applicability of the qualitative findings, and difficulties with the validity of the quantitative ones. Additionally, qualitative findings achieved in the exploratory stage of research contributed to the development of the appropriate measurement tool.

Empirical evidence of brand components and outcomes was gathered from qualitative interview data and quantitative survey results. This mix of data-collection types and methods of enquiry was appropriate to answer the research question.

Collecting rich data about the complex phenomenon of globalisation was only possible by adopting a qualitative methodology. The qualitative methods are concerned with the depth of gathered information. Based on these data obtained from the participants the researcher identified and

described the phenomenon under study (Collis and Hussey 2003; Holloway and Wheeler 2015). As Creswell wrote: 'qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem' (2009: 4). However, Holloway and Wheeler (2015: 12) emphasised that in this process 'meanings should not be reduced to purely subjective accounts of the participants' and the researcher needs to look for patterns and constant elements of the phenomenon under study. Additionally, in the first qualitative stage of the research, based on the inductive reasoning that implies moving from 'the specific to the general, from the data to theory or description' (Holloway and Wheeler 2015: 11), the interview data helped to construct a framework for the questionnaire design, to list the key components and outcomes of strong global brands and to inform the development of the survey. Rich data collected in the third qualitative stage of this work added depth to the quantitative data obtained in the second stage. In both qualitative stages rich detailed information about the phenomenon under study was collected from a small number of participants, which is typical for qualitative methods and 'increases understanding of the cases and situations studied but reduces generalizability' (Patton 1990: 14).

On the other hand, the quantitative data gathered in the second research stage allowed the researcher to make generalisations regarding the global sports team brands' components that appeal to sports fans and outcomes of such brands from the fan's perspective. The emphasis here was on model testing, which involved measurement and analysis of relationships between variables. Quantitative data are numerical and were collected using a structured data-collection instrument. To ensure the data accuracy (Collis and Hussey 2003) a key at this stage of research was careful development of the measurement instrument. Measuring the answers to a set of the same questions facilitated comparison of the obtained data, which led to a set of findings generalisable to similar situations and settings (Patton 1990; Holloway and Wheeler 2015). This stage of the study provided information in breadth from a large number of participants, which is what the quantitative research aims at (Sukamolson 2007; Wimmer and Dominick 2011).

The use of methodological triangulation in this study made the evidence from both types of data and information source more convincing, as according to Eisenhardt (1989: 538): 'the triangulation made possible by multiple data-collection methods provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses.' Triangulation was defined by Denzin (2009: 297) as 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon'. Much the same line was followed by Yin (1994: 92) who argued: 'With triangulation ... the multiple sources of evidence provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon'. In the opinion of Collis and Hussey (2003: 78) triangulation helps to 'overcome the potential bias and sterility of a single-method approach'. Ridenour and Neman (2008: 88) saw it as 'a method of enhancing validity that crosses many other methods'. Several advantages of using triangulation were listed by Jick (1979) who appreciated its role in: contributing to new ways of capturing a research problem or to its enriched explanations; facilitating a synthesis of theories or testing the competing ones; increasing the confidence of a researcher in his or her study results if different methods lead to the same findings.

A brief summary of the stages of research involving various methods of enquiry is outlined below. Each of these stages will be described in more detail in the next sections of this chapter.

Stage I: qualitative interviews with brand experts. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the experts within the area of sports marketing (i.e. branding, public relations, commercial management), participating in the sports team brands creation.

Stage II: survey conducted among sports fans. On the basis of the interviews and subject literature an online questionnaire was built and a survey conducted among sports fans. This allowed the researcher to obtain the fans' perceptions of the strong global brands they support.

Stage III: qualitative interviews with sports fans. The survey results were validated through the use of final interviews conducted with the representatives of Polish fans of global sports teams.

3. Stage I: Qualitative interviews with brand experts

Qualitative interviews – general features. Interviews are one of the most common methods for collecting data in qualitative research (King 2004). One of the reasons for this popularity could be that the interview situation releases in people a need to talk about their work, emotions, problems, etc. People in general are also familiar with the interviewing process – perhaps not always in the scientific sense but as we know it from everyday life (Packer 2010). Moreover, qualitative interviews are flexible – they can be used to examine a range of topics from specific to broader to really complex (King 1994). A qualitative interview was defined by Kvale as 'an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena' (1983: 174). Interviews are indispensable when the researcher wants to learn about e.g. people's feelings, thoughts or their interpretation of the world (Patton 1990; Merriam 2009). Generally speaking, their aim is to show the perspective of interviewees on the phenomenon under study. A low degree of structure of interviews and open questions asked in their course are to leave space for interviewees to share their thoughts and to encourage them to talk. This is why it is crucial to build and maintain rapport during interviews; still an interviewer needs to remain non-judgemental and not to affect the interviewee's responses. If necessary (e.g. more clarity or more details are needed) additional questions may be asked. Interviewees are active participants 'shaping the course of the interview' (King 2004: 11), while an interviewer wants to investigate their perspective (Patton 1990; Phothongsunan 2010).

In this study the researcher decided to choose a semi-structured format of interviewing (Phothongsunan 2010). According to Edwards and Skinner (2009), semi-structured interviews are favoured by sports management researchers, and this type of interview seemed to be also applicable to the subject of this study. What was more important, however, was the researcher intended the interview process to be loosely structured but did not want herself to be overly constrained at the same time. A semi-structured interview which is characterised by 'A thematic, topic-centred, biographical or

narrative approach where the researcher has topics, themes or issues they wish to cover, but with a fluid and flexible structure' (Edwards and Holland 2013: 3), was perfectly suited to meet these criteria. The researcher appreciated the fact that a semi-structured format allowed flexibility in developing a dialogue and new questions to be asked based on what emerged from the interviewee's words. Semi-structured interviews also left more room for the interviewees to answer the questions in a format they chose and to talk about the issues which did not directly stem from the asked question: 'Interviewees are allowed a great deal of latitude in the way they answer, the length of their responses, and even the topics that they discuss' (Packer 2010: 43). On the other hand, a semi-structured interview puts on its participants a degree of organisation and allows them to focus better on a predetermined subject (Patton 1990). A set of questions or ideas that the researcher prepared in advance (so-called interview schedule or interview guide) provided 'some structure for comparison across interviewees in a study by covering the same topics, even in some instances using the same questions' (Edwards and Holland 2013: 29). The fact that the researcher usually started with similar questions led to some consistency in the conducted interviews (Myers 2009). As a result, that helped to organise a dialogue and make use of time designated for each interview (Patton 1990).

As was stated in the previous section of this chapter, interviews as a method of collecting qualitative data were used at the first (exploratory) and the third (confirmatory) stage of this work. The third stage interviews will be discussed in detail later in this chapter; however, most of the general information about interviews and a choice of appropriate interviewing strategy presented above were applicable to both qualitative stages of this research.

Overview of the first stage interviews. The interviews conducted in the first phase of this work fulfilled the exploratory role. According to Johnson (1998) 'exploratory approaches are used to develop hypotheses and more generally to make probes for circumscription, description and interpretation of less well understood topics' (cited in Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999: 149). As such this type of interview is considered to be particularly useful in studies taking a mixed-method approach, especially when mixed with another type of interview (structured interview) (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). If a semi-structured exploratory interview is used prior to a structured interview, data gathered from the former may be used to design the latter. In business and management research, as reported by Cassell (2015: 60), a significant number of studies demonstrated how semi-structured interviews can be employed with the purpose of exploring a particular phenomenon. She used the example of research from the sports management field, where similarly to this work, interviews were a part of a wider mixed-method research which focused on the impact of *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) activities of football teams on the customer-based brand equity (Blumrodt, Bryson and Flanagan 2012). The exploratory semi-structured interviews were used there to design a survey questionnaire administered in the following stage.

A series of semi-structured face-to-face interviews allowed the researcher to collect information directly related to the main research problem. As was previously mentioned, the interviewees were experts experienced in the sports team brand creation. They can be described as key informants – in

other words expert sources of information (Marshall 1996). As practitioners within the area of sports branding they provided valuable insight into the research and helped to generate a list of the key brand components that determine the success of sports team brands. Altogether eleven experts were interviewed. The literature does not clearly indicate the exact number of interviews to be conducted. In many studies their number was determined by so-called 'saturation' – the moment when a researcher realises that further interviews do not provide any new information from what has already been obtained, i.e. when the researcher does not learn anything new (Gratton and Jones 2004). For instance, in the abovementioned work of Blumrodt, Bryson and Flanagan (2012) it was not specified how many people participated in the exploratory semi-structured interviews; the authors continued conducting interviews till the saturation was achieved. The literature proved that the majority of information is gained during the first few interviews and the next ones do not add much. Romney et al. (1986) in their theoretical work estimated that 'as few as four individuals can render accurate information with a high confidence level (.999) if they possess a high degree of knowledge with respect to the domain of inquiry' (cited in Guest, Namey and McKenna 2016: 3).¹ Hence, the use of key informants as interviewees means that fewer interviewees can bring valuable information on the study subject. The number of key informants to be interviewed suggested in various sources (usually practice guides) ranged from 8–10 to 15–35 (Kumar 1989; Sherry and Marlow 1999). In the latter case fewer key informants may be sufficient if the interviews are combined with other data-collection methods such as surveys or document analysis. The number of interviewees depends also on the aim of the interviews. If their nature is exploratory then a smaller number of participants are required. For example, Nejati and Amran (2009) conducted ten exploratory interviews with Malaysian SME managers to identify the motivations for CSR practice. Due to the exploratory nature of the interviews in this study and the fact their participants were key informants, the sample size was not as important as the appropriate selection of the interviewees.

The key informants were selected on the basis of purposive sampling. The main criteria here were their utility for the purpose of this research and the extent to which they offered the opportunity to learn (i.e. about brands of global sports teams). The interviews were identified through personal referrals and research into the UK sports marketing/branding agencies that have sports teams in their client portfolios. For detailed information about the type of interviewees see Appendix 1. The potential interviewees were contacted via email and if they did not respond the researcher contacted them via phone in order to establish if they were interested in participating in the study. As the key informants can be described as high status interviewees, the researcher's interview plan was very much affected by their availability for interview, especially considering the interviews were conducted face to face. Due to convenience and financial reasons one key informant was interviewed on the phone.

¹ Other studies also showed that the first interviews bring most information. Morgan et al. (2002) having conducted interviews concerning environmental risks, discovered that most new data were identified in the first five to six interviews; Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) while analysing interview information gathered in West Africa from female sex workers noticed that the first six interviews revealed 80 themes which comprised 70 per cent of all identified themes (cited in Guest, Namey and McKenna 2016).

Before interviews the participants received via email the informed consent form where among others they could have agreed to be recorded during interviews. The other document sent to them was the participant information sheet outlining information about the research, purpose of the interview, risks and benefits associated with the interview, how confidentiality and anonymity would be ensured, withdrawal options, who to complain to about the research process, etc. As Edwards and Holland (2013: 67) stated, informing the study participants about their research project and gaining their informed consent is a good ethical practice. Silverman and Patterson (2015) also emphasised the role of informed consent in setting up rapport with interview participants.

The semi-structured interviews were based on the interview schedule covering 'a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview' (Patton 1990: 283) along with probes used to stimulate follow-up responses (King 2004). How detailed it would be depends on how many of the issues that are to be discussed in interviews can be indicated in advance and to what extent it is important to ask all interviewees the same questions in the same way or order (Patton 1990: 283). The interview schedule used during the first stage of this study allowed flexibility in a dialogue and questions to be worded spontaneously but within a particular subject. At the same time it introduced continuity across interviews (Silverman and Patterson 2015). 'In a typical semi-structured interview the researcher has a list of questions or series of topics they want to cover in the interview, an interview guide, but there is flexibility in how and when the questions are put and how the interviewee can respond' noted Edwards and Holland (2013: 29). Thanks to the interview guide the researcher obtained information on more or less the same issues from all interviewed participants (Patton 1990).

The interview schedule used for all interviews covered a set of topics revolving around the nature of sports brands and the key components and outcomes of strong global brands, and consisted of three sections. The first one contained general questions about brands. The purpose of this set of questions was to see what is so unique about sports brands in comparison with non-sports brands. The next section was focused on sports team brands. Here the researcher tried to find out the opinion of her interviewees on where a sports team brand derives its strength. The purpose of the final set of questions was to examine what a strong global sports team brand allows its management team to achieve. For the interview schedule used in this stage of research see Appendix 2.

Two pilot interviews conducted prior to the series of eleven interviews allowed the researcher to ensure that the interview schedule questions would be interpreted unequivocally. Taking into consideration that individuals involved in pilot studies need to be similar to those taking part in real interviews (e.g. Miller and Crabtree 1999; Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal 2008), the researcher asked two sports marketing experts and researchers from the researcher's university department to participate in pilot interviews. Both interviews were recorded and notes were taken during their course. When they terminated, the participants' perceptions on the interview process were briefly discussed as was recommended by Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (2008). As a result of the pilot studies, new prompts were added to some questions and issues in the schedule to facilitate the answers. Moreover, the pilot studies gave the researcher some idea of how real interviews would look like, how much time they might take, etc. Additionally, the researcher had the opportunity to get familiar with the practical side of

interviewing (i.e. making notes while listening to an interviewee and interacting with him or her when necessary).

The interviews lasted from 40 minutes to 2 hours. The majority of them were recorded (after obtaining the necessary permission from the interviewees); only one interviewee did not agree to be recorded. Additionally, notes were taken during all interviews. The reasons for notetaking were: to note the key points made by the interviewees in order to facilitate the remaining parts of the interviews; to facilitate the process of data analysis; to check and verify the answers given by the interviewees earlier; and to 'give nonverbal feedback to the interviewee' (Patton 1990: 349) to show that the researcher is being attentive to him or to indicate the importance of what the interviewee just said. In addition, during the interview that was not recorded, notetaking was the only way of reporting the answers given by the interviewee. Because of time constraints this interview had to be completed over the phone. This gave the researcher the opportunity to verify the accuracy of data gathered in the earlier, face-to-face part of the interview.

The interviews (or their parts) were subsequently transcribed. The reason for transcribing only parts of the interviews was time constraints. Transcribing was facilitated by the use of notes taken during the particular interviews. Such a procedure is proper and acceptable, as reported by Patton (1990: 350):

Where resources are not sufficient to permit full transcriptions, the interviewer can work back and forth between interview notes and sections of the tape; only those quotations that are particularly important for data analysis and reporting need be transcribed.

A similar solution was used in the study by Länsisalmi, Peiró and Kivimäki (2004: 243–253) where they fully transcribed 33 out of 63 interviews. The interviews transcribed were the most informative and 'were selected on the basis of their "density" regarding both their descriptive strength and richness in referring to various themes' and 'included several representative quotes describing different dimensions of a variety of themes' (Länsisalmi, Peiró and Kivimäki 2004: 245).

Qualitative data analysis. The main approach to the qualitative interview data analysis in the first (and later in the third) stage of this research is grounded theory methodology, which refers here to a style of conducting qualitative data analysis (Länsisalmi, Peiró and Kivimäki 2004: 242). The reason for choosing this approach is its ability to extract the information needed to reach the aims of the study, i.e. building, developing and verifying the model of a global brand – its determinants and its outcomes. As Länsisalmi, Peiró and Kivimäki (2004: 253) state:

grounded theory can be used to generate a formal theory about a certain phenomenon ... however, it can also be used as a methodology verifying *a priori* concepts. It could be applied in a similar fashion as template analysis starting from a loosely predetermined conceptual frame and verifying and/or modifying it through gathering and analysing data with grounded theory methodology.

Grounded theory used in such a way in the first stage of the data-collection process helped to organise and examine large volumes of data acquired from multiple sources. On the other hand, considering the preliminary character of the first stage of interviews, such an approach was flexible

enough to highlight the in-depth and complex information underlying the codes identified without employing too much rigour for data analysis.

Before the proper analysis began the researcher with the research question in mind read each transcript along with interview notes corresponding to it in order to get some general idea of the content of each interview and how it applied to the subject of study. Based on this initial examination of the transcripts the researcher put up brief summaries of what information each interview brought. This exercise allowed the researcher to focus the analysis process and proved to be useful later in the development of categories and themes (Patton 1990; Stuckey 2015). The proper grounded theory analysis started by identifying a list of categories emerging from the data gathered. These categories were constantly compared ('constant comparison' process) (King 1994: 26) to the new data until nothing more can be found out about a particular category in the data set ('theoretical saturation') (Glaser and Strauss 1967 cited in Lämsä, Peiró and Kivimäki 2004: 245). For King (1994) grounded theory is an example of the 'editing' approach to data analysis (Miller and Crabtree 1999) where 'the interpreter enters the text much like an editor searching for meaningful segments, cutting, pasting, and rearranging until the reduced summary reveals a helpful interpretation' (Miller and Crabtree 1999: 21–23).

Manual coding was used to make sense of and organise the data. The use of computer software was considered; however, it was rejected because of the attempt to obtain rich information about the phenomenon being studied and the manageable amount of data. The categories were identified, analysed and categorised on the basis of the open coding procedure (Collis and Hussey 2003: 272). Simultaneously, in the axial coding process the data were restructured and rebuilt into patterns 'with the intention of revealing links and relationships' (Collis and Hussey 2003: 273) between the categories. Finally, in the selective coding the core categories were developed (Collis and Hussey 2003).

Global sports team brand 'favouriteness' model. As mentioned earlier the interview stage of the research was a basis for further development of the study. On the basis of the abovementioned content analysis process and the sports team brand marketing literature available, the researcher hypothesised the definitive eleven-variable model of components and outcomes of global sports team brand favouriteness (see Chapter IV section 1 for a graphic representation of the model). The first stage of research also informed the questionnaire development.

The variables included in the model were assessed through the use of appropriate measures. They were defined and appropriate measures were developed. The items for eleven scales corresponding to eleven variables in the model were generated. They were based on the variable conceptualisations that emerged from the interviews and from the literature. If no relevant measures existed in past research, individual items were developed by the researcher. The abovementioned procedure of generating items was to ensure measurement adequacy (Hinkin 1995: 960). The eleven variables in

the brand favouriteness model identified in the first stage of this study are examined in detail below.²

4. Stage II: Survey design, administration and data-analysis procedures

Quantitative survey – general information. A quantitative survey represents one of the most popular quantitative methodologies (Collis and Hussey 2003). People are in general familiar with it as most of them have participated in a survey in their lives. Balnaves and Caputi defined survey research as ‘a method of collecting data from people about who they are (education, finances, etc.), how they think (motivations, beliefs, etc.) and what they do (behaviour)’ (2001: 76). Collis and Hussey emphasised the fact that in a survey a researcher learns about a larger group of people based on the assessment of its smaller part: ‘a *sample* of subjects is drawn from a *population* and studied to make inferences about the population’ (2003: 66). Even when the population is too large to examine all its members, a survey allows the researcher to gather information about it. Hence, the undeniable advantages of a quantitative survey are the ability to examine large groups of people and its potential for generalisability – conclusions drawn from a studied sample may be applicable to a wider population. This stems from the fact that a quantitative survey is concerned with breadth not depth (as a qualitative approach) of information about people studied. The use of surveys is applicable to at least three situations (Recker 2013: 76): when it is necessary to examine a phenomenon to elicit important constructs and to measure them (exploration purpose); to ascertain facts about a population and study it considering occurring attitudes, processes, behaviours, events, etc. (description purpose); to test theory and hypothesised relationships between variables (explanation purpose). The theory testing process is based on deductive reasoning which involves ‘predicting that certain things will follow (will be empirically observable) if the theory is true’ (de Vaus 2014: 10). Surveys may be incorporated as a part of a mixed-method approach. Quantitative surveys involve collecting quantitative data, hence measurement – Jankowicz (1995: 89) described it as ‘the making of observations’ – is critical to the research process. To this end surveys use a standardised instrument – a standardised questionnaire, ‘a prepared and fixed interviewing schedule’ (Brace 2008: 2). Brace (2008: 4) saw the role of the questionnaire in providing ‘a standardized interview across all subjects’, as it allows a researcher to ask the same questions in exactly the same format to all surveyed respondents, and then to compare and interpret their answers. This, in the case of a large number of people to be examined, would not be feasible without the use of a standardised questionnaire.

A survey is one of the most popular research designs in sports team branding studies but is not dominant. In works focused specifically on sports teams operations in the global marketplace the prevailing approach is a case study while a survey methodology was only employed in some of them (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Menefee and Casper 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). In this work a survey took the form of an online self-administered questionnaire. It was conducted among

² Following the procedure of item generation the scales were further developed in the process of factor analysis and reliability testing outlined in detail in Chapter V section 1.2. In the context of scale construction, factor analysis was undertaken with the purpose of the data reduction and refining measures, while Chronbach’s alpha was employed to assess the scales’ internal consistency reliability (Hinkin 1995).

Polish fans of global sports teams and allowed the researcher to test the global sports team brand favouriteness model developed in the first stage of research.

The survey questionnaire was built based on the information obtained in the initial stage of research during the qualitative interviews and through the subject literature review. The interviewed experts in sports branding provided valuable insights on the essence of global sports team brands, their antecedents and outcomes. The qualitative data along with the information obtained from the literature concerning the antecedents of global sports team brands from the managerial and fan perspective served to build a research framework, formulate research hypotheses and inform the survey development. As was stated in the previous section of this chapter the scale items used in the survey questionnaire to measure the variables were either adapted from the existing research (Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002b; Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann 2005; Choi et al. 2010; Byon, Cottingham and Carroll 2010) or developed by the researcher herself in the light of the first stage of research findings – if the researcher did not identify appropriate scales in the past literature to measure some aspects of sports team brands in the global context and from the international sports fans' perspective. This was mainly the case of the antecedents of global sports team brand favouriteness (for a graphic representation of the model refer to Chapter IV section 1). The survey items were grouped in eleven sections that corresponded to the variables in the researcher's model: global sports team brand favouriteness and its antecedents and outcomes. All the questions in the survey questionnaire were related to the brand of a favourite global sports team that respondents (sports fans) were asked to indicate at the beginning of the questionnaire. For the questionnaire used in this stage of research see Appendix 3. In the course of the questionnaire development the researcher had to address several issues: questionnaire translation, pilot survey testing, online survey design, sampling and sample size. They are now discussed below.

4.1. Translation

As the initial version of the questionnaire was written and edited in English and the target respondents were Polish speakers, the questionnaire was translated from Polish to English. Translation equivalence was ensured through the use of the back-translation process (Craig and Douglas 2000). Without such rigorous procedures data validity and 'generalization of results beyond the culture of origin' (Su and Parham 2002: 581) might be affected.

The back-translation involves the translation of a text from the original to the target language, and then another person translating it back to the source language for the purpose of comparison (Brislin 1970). The procedure is not limited to a simple translation of a questionnaire; rather it relies on exporting it from one culture to another. According to Su and Parham (2002: 582), 'Achieving equivalence between the source version and the target version of an instrument is critical in translation and involves not only lingual, but also cultural considerations.' Hence, it is necessary to focus on conveying the meaning of words not on their literal translation (Sechrest, Fay and Zaidi 1972), especially when

dealing with expressions, words or idioms that cannot be directly translated from the original language to the target language of an instrument.

Therefore, to eliminate any potential translation errors, the questionnaire in this study, which originally was written in English, was independently translated to Polish than back to English again. In line with the back-translation procedure, two bilingual translators familiar with both the source and target languages (i.e. Polish and English) took part in the process.

Before the process could start, a so-called 'cultural translation' was conducted to check the cultural relevance of the questionnaire. This involved 'replacing words and phrases in the source language with phrases that are culturally appropriate for the target culture' (Su and Parham 2002: 582).

Subsequently, the researcher translated the original English version of the questionnaire to Polish. Then the Polish version was translated back to English by an independent translator who did not have access to the initial English questionnaire.

The two English versions of the instrument were compared by an English-speaking reviewer to consider equivalence of meaning. As these two versions differed from each other (altogether the reviewer made six comments), the process of back-translation was repeated. Some of these comments referred to words and expressions that did not convey the intended meaning after their direct translation to Polish. Therefore, a couple of expressions in the initial English version were reworded to facilitate a more accurate back-translation. The problematic items were translated to Polish and then back-translated to English. When the reviewer did not identify any further differences in meaning between both English versions of the questionnaire, this indicated that the Polish version of the questionnaire was equivalent to the original English version, and the whole process was complete.

4.2. Pilot testing

A pilot study – a 'preliminary test of a questionnaire' – is useful in identifying both problems and benefits in the questionnaire design (Balnaves and Caputi 2001: 87). De Vaus (2014) advised to use it to check for ambiguities or difficulties that respondents might have in responding. Pilot tests increase the usability, validity and reliability of the survey (Newman and McNeil 1998) and allow the researcher to test a questionnaire for potential errors (Brace 2008).

In order to evaluate the adequacy of the questionnaire used in this study, two pilot surveys were conducted. The first one tested the initial English version of the questionnaire and the other examined the Polish version. The latter complemented the back-translation process outlined above. The general aims of both pilot investigations were similar: to assess the quality of the instrument to be used for data collection. Both versions – Polish and English – were assessed on the basis of the following criteria (Sapsford and Jupp 1996): Are the questions and accompanying instructions worded

appropriately? Is the length of the questionnaire manageable? What is the best order for the questions? Additionally, the pilot survey of the questionnaire in Polish aimed to evaluate the quality of translation.

Eleven individuals took part in each pilot investigation. They were recruited on the basis of purposive sampling to cover various types of individual and, subsequently, a range of answers to the questions (Sapsford and Jupp 1996: 103). All were sports team fans, which was crucial as the actual survey was aimed at collecting data from other sports team fans. This was in line with the existing literature recommending that individuals participating in a pilot survey need to be similar to those who take part in the actual survey (Kane and Radosevich 2011: 289). They were instructed about the aims of the pilot survey. The instructions were either emailed to the respondents along with the questionnaire or printed copies of the instructions and questionnaire were given to them. After completing the questionnaire they were contacted for comments on several questions included in the instructions. They were asked if they agreed with the order of questions, if they understood the questionnaire, and if the length of the questionnaire was appropriate. Furthermore, they were invited to provide any other comments concerning the questionnaire.

In the case of the Polish pilot, two of the eleven individuals were recruited for a detailed item-by-item interview. In addition to the issues above, they were asked to comment on the most problematic items indicated by the other nine respondents who had been more briefly interviewed earlier. Later these two individuals were also asked to review the online version of the questionnaire in order to assess how the questionnaire format worked.

Ultimately, as a result of both pilot investigations, 23 amendments were made to the questionnaire: 16 revisions were made to the initial English version of the questionnaire before it was translated to Polish and 7 changes were made to the Polish version after it was reviewed by the pilot sample. Moreover, 6 amendments were made to the original English questionnaire during the back-translation (2 were made to facilitate the Polish translation and express the meaning of some English expressions in Polish). Most of the changes to the questionnaire resulted from some errors and concerned translation issues. Some of the most important amendments made to the questionnaire concerned: the use of a more natural and more adjusted to sports fans language that led to adding a description of what ethos and brand identity means in the Brand identity section of the questionnaire; in the Attendance section in the first question adding the word 'regularly'; in the Product purchase section in questions 4–6 listing in brackets the examples of products to emphasise what type of products these questions referred to; in the Demographic questions section adding the 'Prefer not to say' answer in the question about income (this question was considered to be sensitive by some Polish respondents).

The length of the questionnaire was judged as appropriate by all the respondents and did not cause survey taking fatigue. It took about 15 minutes for the respondents to complete it. The questionnaire flowed well in a logical order hence study participants agreed that it was not necessary to change the

questions and sections sequence. All questions were answered. Additionally, both respondents who assessed the final online version of the questionnaire agreed that it was easy to read from the computer screen, its navigation did not pose any problems just as selecting the right answer using radio buttons. This strengthened the researcher's opinion that the questionnaire format and design would allow the actual survey respondents to go smoothly through all the questions.

4.3. Online survey

The questionnaire consisted of 53 items in a five-point Likert-scale format with the endpoints: '1 – Strongly disagree' and '5 – Strongly agree'. These items were grouped in eleven sections; they corresponded to the eleven variables in the researcher's model of antecedents and outcomes of the brand favouriteness construct. Each variable was measured using three to eight items. The minimum of three items per variable has been acceptable in existing research. For instance, Cook et al. (1981) claimed that internal consistency reliability is ensured with 'as few as three items' (cited in Hinkin 1995: 972). Shorter scales effectively minimise response biases (e.g. Hinkin 1995; Pather and Uys 2008).

The length of the questionnaire was determined by the number of the questionnaire sections responding to each variable and the number of items in each scale. The length of online survey, as in the case of other types of survey, is vital for the quality of responses – it decreases with the length of the questionnaire (Galesic and Bosnjak 2009; Clow and James 2014). The questions posed later in the questionnaire are not read thoroughly and are answered quickly: 'As fatigue and boredom accumulate throughout the survey, the respondents may be less and less willing to invest the effort needed for good quality answers' (Galesic and Bosnjak 2009: 358). The pilot survey showed that in the case of the questionnaire used in this study it took all the respondents approximately 15 minutes to complete it (including each of the two respondents who tested its final online version). According to the research from Survey Sampling International (Cape and Phillips 2015), the average survey length in 2015 was estimated at 23 minutes and that was considered to be too long to keep respondents' attention if compared with a maximum attention span for an adult of 20 minutes (e.g. Malone 2003; Lengel and Kuczala 2010). This would imply that the length of the online questionnaire employed in this study allowed respondents to maintain attention during its completion.

Bristol Online Survey (BOS) software, recommended by the university, was used to build the online questionnaire, to administer it to respondents, and to collect and export the survey data to another software used specifically for data analysis (SPSS). In order to ensure the questionnaire was designed professionally, the researcher used the Polish version of the software, an additional feature of BOS, not available in the basic software package. This caused a delay in the research process as the purchase of the multilingual version of BOS required authorisation from the university.

The researcher aimed at simplicity and clarity in the survey layout and presentation (Hewson et al. 2003). To some extent she was limited by the features of the abovementioned software. However, a

simple design was also suggested by many researchers and practitioners despite the development of the latest technology offering new interactive ways of designing and structuring online questionnaires. 'While these high-tech features are compelling, the rule of thumb when it comes to online survey design is to keep it simple' suggested Sue and Ritter (2012: 99). It is mainly due to some interactive features that increase a survey download time but some people may also be more familiar with a simple and easy to use format (Miller 2006; Sue and Ritter 2012). In her survey the researcher adapted the original questionnaire to the online format. When constructing the online survey, it was ensured that the text on each page was visible immediately on the screen without the need for scrolling down to the bottom of the page. Furthermore, as respondents were not able to return to a previous page of the online questionnaire, all necessary information was available to them on each page, even if that meant repeating it across various pages. The researcher avoided using the 'mailto:' command in the online survey for respondents to contact her with comments or questions, as this command is not supported by some Internet browsers (Hewson et al. 2003: 84).

4.4. Sampling

The process of identifying a survey sample involved selecting respondents that are Polish fans of global sports teams. Online sampling allowed the researcher to collect a satisfying data set in a relatively short period of time (one month). Undoubtedly, online surveys allow researchers to reduce costs and are very efficient at the same time – they can be completed and sent back to a researcher in a shorter period of time than a traditional mail survey (Gates and McDaniel 2007; de Bont and van Hamersveld 2007; Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2009). The use of online surveys widely increased also because they offer access to data while the survey is still open for respondents and allow 'to draw samples on a global scale' (Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2009: 152).

The researcher believes that online sampling was the best way to reach a very specific group of Polish sports fans. According to Bradley (2010: 156), the best method to sample interest group members is the Internet. Online surveys also guarantee 'ease of interviewing minority samples' (de Bont and van Hamersveld 2007: 403). Moreover, the number and diversity of Internet users are increasing and the Internet allows researchers 'to contact individuals who would otherwise be practically inaccessible' (Hewson et al. 2003: 36). Finally, in sports research conducted in the global markets several studies employed online surveys to examine foreign fans of global football and basketball teams (Hognestad 2006; Kerr 2009b; Menefee and Casper 2011; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016).

Existing studies have proved that, although online sample representativeness is still an issue concerning researchers, 'anxieties have declined' (de Bont and van Hamersveld 2007: 403). Gates and McDaniel (2007: 182) illustrated this trend with the example of research by Lee Smith (2002), COO of Insight Express, who 'found that online research delivered data of the same quality a using mail surveys in one-eighth the time and at one-eighth the cost'. Another study conducted by Smith and

Leigh (1997) proved that Internet and non-Internet samples are often not only comparable in terms of demographic characteristics of respondents but also that online samples may be more representative than traditional ones. Furthermore, representativeness is a major concern only for certain types of research (for instance, it may affect the results of a study of old or socially disadvantaged respondents).

The researcher administered her questionnaire to a volunteer sample. The survey was open to anyone who wished to complete it. The reason for this was a lack of knowledge of the sampling frame that could be used for drawing a sample. However, as suggested by Hewson et al. (2003: 37), in order to have better control over the types of Internet user that would come across the survey, the researcher approached particular interest newsgroups and websites that are visited by specific users, i.e. sports fans. Furthermore, a relatively high generalisability of survey results was ensured through a high response rate guaranteed by an online survey method (Gates and McDaniel 2007: 181). Finally, to reduce the non-probabilistic sampling biases, Hewson et al. (2003: 38) advised posting information about the survey to a wide range of websites or newsgroups. Therefore, the link to the researcher's survey was promoted through various online channels.

Firstly, the link to the online questionnaire was available on the *Przegląd Sportowy* (the oldest and the biggest Polish sports daily) website, on various pages in the news section. Additionally, it was published and then republished on the Facebook profile of the daily. The fact that the link was available to readers of *Przegląd Sportowy* is emphasised because this daily reaches fans of various sports disciplines. Additionally, the link was also promoted to readers of sports news portals or members of global sports teams' fan clubs in Poland, covering disciplines such as football, Formula 1 and basketball. This was done either by approaching editors-in-chief of the news portals and the fan clubs' representatives and asking them to share the link with fans or, if that was not possible, the link was published on the discussion forums of those websites. In this case, their members were asked to complete the survey themselves and to share the link with other sports fans they know. As a result, the link reached 26 discussion forums and fan clubs altogether. Finally, the researcher placed the link in publicly available sports news sections of the most popular general information portals (Onet.pl, WP.pl, Interia.pl), specifically among readers' comments under various news items.

4.5. Sample size

The researcher analysed her data using a regression procedure. In order to determine the regression sample size, Harris's formula was used. According to it, for regression equations using more than five independent variables, a minimum of ten participants per independent variable is necessary; however, 'if the circumstances allow, a researcher would have better power to detect a small effect size with approximately 30 participants per variable' (Wilson Van Voorhis and Morgan 2007: 48). As prior to multiple regression the researcher ran factor analysis, the sample size had to be at least 300, according to the general rule of thumb (Wilson Van Voorhis and Morgan 2007: 48).

The final number of respondents whose answers were taken into account in the data analysis was 614. The overall number of respondents was 686. However, the researcher had to exclude 72 under-18 individuals who completed the questionnaire despite the information placed in the introduction stating that the study was addressed to those who are at least 18 years old. The promotion of the survey link through various online channels and the fact that the researcher offered an incentive to the respondents (they had a chance to win a sports kit from their favourite global sports team) vastly helped to reach – and then exceed – the required sample size.

4.6. Analysis of survey data

Quantitative analysis was facilitated by the SPSS software package. The quantitative data were examined through multiple and simple linear regression analyses. Regression analysis is a family of techniques of data analysis that is used to assess the relationship between variables and covers among others simple linear regression and multiple regression employed in this study. Simple linear regression examines the relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable (so-called predictor), while multiple regression is used to explore the relationship between one dependent variable and many independent variables (many predictors) (Pallant 2005). Among others regression techniques allow the researcher to estimate to what extent a number of independent variables can predict a particular dependent variable and which of these variables is the best predictor. In this work support for the use of regression analyses was argued by the fact that the researcher wanted to 'predict one variable from a combination of several others' (Sapsford and Jupp 1996: 268), rather than exploring any interactive effects between the variables (Sapsford and Jupp 1996: 263). Before conducting the regression analysis, the reliability of the scales was assessed through the use of Cronbach's alpha, which helped the researcher to check for a scale's internal consistency and see if all the scale items measure the same construct (Pallant 2005: 90).

Prior to the regression analysis the factor analysis, a 'data reduction' technique that helped 'to reduce a large number of related variables to a more manageable number' (Pallant 2005: 172), was undertaken. Factor analysis has been commonly employed especially within psychology and social sciences (Webb 1999). In general its aim is to try to uncover the simplest method of data interpretation (so-called parsimony) (Yong and Pearce 2013). It does it by taking a set of variables and summarising the data based on a smaller number of factors (Pallant 2005). When there are a large number of items in the questionnaire, factor analysis is a good starting point as it reduces them to a more manageable amount, connects the variables into meaningful categories, and reveals underlying patterns – overall, it facilitates interpretations (Yong and Pierce 2013). This technique was often criticised for subjectivity in the interpretation of its results.

While the choice of the above data-analysis techniques in this study was to a great extent determined by the aims the researcher wanted to achieve in this stage of the research, what also mattered was their widespread use in social sciences, including sports research. Often in studies that examined various theoretical models referring to sports team brands (e.g. team brand equity, team identification,

team brand associations) the researchers in order to analyse quantitative data used methods both from the family of techniques falling within factor analysis as well as those falling within regression analysis.

5. Stage III: Follow-up interviews

Five semi-structured telephone interviews with Polish sports fans were conducted in order to verify and/or confirm survey results. Their purpose agreed with the following rationale behind using a mixed-method approach where: 'The data can be used to elaborate, enhance and add clarification to findings' (David and Sutton 2011: 297). The interviews with fans allowed the researcher to throw light on the numerical data obtained in the previous stage of the research and make them more understandable and interesting to a broader audience. According to Slack and Parent, it is a valued and even required approach in sport management studies where 'if a study relies on quantitative data, results must be interpreted to bring in a qualitative component' (2006: 20).

The interviewees were recruited among the survey respondents (i.e. Polish sports fans) on the basis of purposive sampling. The main criterion was their utility for the purpose of this confirmatory stage of research. As these fans had already completed the survey, the researcher believed they would add valuable insights to the survey results. Besides, finding other people who were equally knowledgeable and would offer the opportunity to learn about Polish fans' attitudes towards global sports team brands would be too time consuming.

The number of interviewees was determined by the aim of this stage of research. As the interviews served illuminating and adding depth to the survey findings (the model of global sports team brands favouriteness) the researcher did not aim at obtaining information from the sample comparable with the one used for the purpose of the first stage of the research (interviews with brand experts).

Theoretical literature does not give a good answer to the question 'how many interviews to conduct?' In fact there is little agreement on this issue (Baker and Edwards 2012). Some researchers try to answer this question analysing journal articles and, based on them, calculating the approximate number of interviewees (e.g. Marshall et al. 2013; Gentles et al. 2015). The research papers examined by them, however, are usually purely qualitative studies where interviews were the main source of information. This study combines qualitative with quantitative methods of data collection, hence:

It might be argued that this reduces the need for rigour in qualitative interviews, as these are merely a deeper investigation of features that are already known by more rigorous means. However, substantive conclusions are drawn from these qualitative studies, often as a way of explaining why the quantitative results turned out the way they did ... (Galvin 2015: 4).

The above quotation well describes the process that took place in the third, confirmatory stage of this research (i.e. interviews with sports fans), which provided qualitative insights into the quantitative findings obtained based on the rigorous procedure (fan survey conducted earlier). Hence, the use of

both qualitative and quantitative data sources in this study was important for the number of interviewed fans. 'In this context, semi-structured interview may be viewed as a way of supplementing other data collection methods, and it may be sufficient to conduct only a few interviews ...' (Laforest 2009: 2).

Moreover, the researcher in the course of this research stage noticed that most of the opinions of the interviewed fans repeated, hence it was felt that obtained information was sufficient to validate the quantitative findings. This supposition mirrored some conclusions from the existing research. Romney et al. (1986), cited in Guest, Namey and McKenna (2016), calculated that 'as few as four individuals can render accurate information with a high confidence level (.999) if they possess a high degree of knowledge with respect to the domain of inquiry' (2016: 3). The individuals who participated in this stage of research were knowledgeable about global sports team brands being at the centre of this work, because they were fans of those teams recruited through thematic sports websites. After all, it is the essence of purposive sampling 'to select information-rich cases' (Patton 1990: 169). Morgan et al. (2002) and Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) who investigated how new information is produced in interviews (cited in Guest, Namey and McKenna 2016: 4) came to similar conclusions as Romney et al. (1986) arrived in their empirical studies. In the former, based on the interviews on the subject of environmental risks, Morgan et al. (2002) noticed that the majority of new data was found in the first five to six interviews and subsequent interviews brought little new information. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) having interviewed female sex workers in West Africa discovered that 70 per cent of all interview themes (80 themes) were identified in the first six interviews.

All respondents at the time they completed the survey were asked if they agreed to participate in the follow-up interviews. Of all those who agreed, an invitation email was sent to the fans who best represented the various groups of fans identified in the overall sample of survey respondents. The majority of survey respondents were young people aged 18–34. In terms of sports discipline, most of the responses came from football fans; however, basketball and Formula 1 fans were represented too.

As among the survey respondents the biggest group were football fans the researcher included more football fans also in the interview sample. It was filled up with the NBA basketball and Formula 1 fans. Additionally, a sample as a whole was supposed to represent various age and gender groups identified among survey respondents. However, as it turned out, the number of female survey respondents who had agreed to participate in a potential interview was low and the researcher did not manage to contact any of them. Instead another male respondent was included in the sample. Finally, in the case when it was difficult to decide who to choose, the additional information that each respondent could have written at the end of the questionnaire ('Further comments' box) was taken into consideration. This opportunity was used by a considerable group of the surveyed fans. Based on this information provided by fans and using purely subjective judgement the researcher selected those fans who seemed to offer the best opportunity to learn (that is the essence of purposive sampling).³

³ Here are some examples of the statements from the survey participants that were helpful in making the final decision of whom to select:

From those respondents who first replied to the invitation email, based on the respondents' availability, five interviewees were selected to take part in follow-up interviews. The information of the follow-up interview participants is presented below:

Table 2: The profiles of fans participating in the interviews

Gender	Age	Sport discipline	Team name
Male	25–34	Basketball	Chicago Bulls
Male	18–24	Formula 1	Ferrari F1
Male	18–24	Football	FC Barcelona
Male	18–24	Football	Manchester United
Male	45–54	Football	Newcastle United

The interviews were conducted on the phone. This was determined by the respondents' availability and the fact that this technique is more cost saving than face-to-face interviews. The interviewees were recruited from various regions of Poland and travelling to each of these places would also have been time consuming.

The interview schedule was created on the basis of the survey results. It consisted of a series of issues or questions concerning the variables from the global sports team brand favouriteness model identified in the quantitative stage of the research. The interviewees were asked about their favourite global sports team brand, its antecedents and outcomes. The interview schedule contained several semi-structured questions (along with some prompts that were supposed to facilitate answering the questions). Nevertheless, the researcher intended to treat them only as a guide and be flexible, in the course of interviews modifying questions from the guide and asking additional questions where necessary for the interview to serve best the purpose of the survey results validation. For the interview schedule used in this stage of research see Appendix 4.

The interview schedule was tested in two pilot interviews. The participants were sports fans because as the existing research suggested (e.g. Miller and Crabtree 1999; Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal 2008) individuals taking part in the pilot study need to be similar to those who participate in proper interviews (however, they did not recruit from the survey sample). The pilot interviews helped to estimate the foreseen length of interviews, the questions that might pose some difficulties and needed potential prompts or rewording. As advised by Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal 'the opportunity should be taken to obtain as much feedback as possible from each interviewee on their perceptions of the interview content and process' (2008: 84). Hence, also in the case of both pilot interviews the way how they proceeded was discussed later with their participants. The pilot studies revealed the need for deleting

This team is something more than only a football team, it's a life ideology. I think that apart from providing emotions it has an impact on the way people understand and perceive the world. This team connects and divides people. It teaches humility, how to reach ones' goals and not to give up and fight till the end. It's loyal, systematic and determined to reach its aims. These values are important in my life and that is why it's my team.

I have supported Juventus since 1997, when I was sixteen. It all started from the lost Champions League match in 1997. I liked how Alex Del Piero and the whole team played and decided to find out more about them. Now while I'm writing this, it gives me the creeps. At the beginning I asked myself how this would be when Del Piero stops playing for Juve. Would I be supporting the team? At first when I wasn't sure but then I knew that Juve is the only team...

a few detailed questions due to the fact that the answers to them overlapped with the answers to other questions. A shortened interview schedule allowed the researcher to cover the same issues in fewer questions and to reduce the length of interviews.

Prior to their interviews five participants were emailed the informed consent form and the participant information sheet outlining information about the research, purpose of the interview, risks and benefits associated with the interview, withdrawal options, etc. The interviews were to take 10–15 minutes. This was the case for three interviews, however two of them took more time. They were recorded after obtaining the necessary permission from the interviewees (expressed in the informed consent form) and later transcribed. Additionally, notes were taken during all interviews.

The data obtained from these confirmatory interviews was examined using similar procedures to those described in section 3 of this chapter.

6. Evaluating the research quality

Throughout this study the researcher made an effort to ensure the credibility of the study's findings (i.e. their reliability and validity).

A finding is reliable if it can be repeated (Collis and Hussey 2003). In practice this means that if the study was to be conducted again – replicated – the results obtained should be the same. It refers to the precision of a measurement instrument (Kerlinger 1964). Validity demonstrates whether 'the research findings accurately represent what is really happening in the situation' (Collis and Hussey 2003: 58). It indicates if a measurement instrument measures or reflects those features of the phenomenon it is supposed to (Collis and Hussey 2003).

As Collis and Hussey (2003) stated, in quantitative studies reliability is usually high and it can be determined reasonably easy. On the other hand, validity tends to be low. The fact that quantitative research is concerned with precise measurement means that measures may not accurately reflect the phenomenon the researcher aims to investigate. The qualitative approach tends to generate rich data and to provide in-depth information about the phenomenon. Hence, validity in qualitative studies is usually high (Collis and Hussey 2003). The reliability criterion is interpreted in a different way than in quantitative research as replication in qualitative studies is difficult to perform. Collis and Hussey claimed that, 'It is not important whether qualitative measures are reliable in the positivistic sense, but whether similar observations and interpretations can be made on different occasions and/or by different observers' (2003: 58).

The use of a mixed method approach in this work helped to overcome the abovementioned weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methodologies – the limited reliability of the qualitative findings and difficulties with the validity of the quantitative ones. Triangulation of methodologies and data sources enhanced the overall validity, reliability and generalisability – the applicability of the

study's findings to situations beyond the situation from the study (Collis and Hussey 2003) – of the findings. Through triangulation it is possible to 'overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-method ... single-theory studies' (Denzin 2009: 313). Ridenour and Neman (2008: 88) saw triangulation as 'a method of enhancing validity that crosses many other methods'.

At the quantitative stage of research the validity and reliability was enhanced through following particular procedures. In the questionnaire instrument development the measures were developed based on the careful review of the existing literature and the in-depth data gathered in the first qualitative stage of research – the interviews with the industry experts. Two researchers possessing knowledge of the sports industry were consulted about the items in the original (English) version of the questionnaire to assess if they accurately represented the constructs the researcher aimed to investigate – the items were checked for the wording, adequacy, clarity, etc. As the original instrument was to be translated to Polish (in order to be administered to a sample of Polish sports fans) it was also necessary to ensure validity of the translated questionnaire. That was done already at the stage of editing questionnaire items in English when the wording and in particular sentence structure were chosen in such a way to minimise problems during translation (Hambleton and Kanjee 1993). Validity of the Polish version of the questionnaire was also enhanced through the use of the rigorous procedure of the back-translation process (described in detail in section 4.1) (Hambleton and Kanjee 1993). Both versions of the instrument (English and Polish) were tested in pilot studies, which provided support for the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Eleven individuals participated in each pilot study, which is a sufficient number according to Fink (1995) who recommended a minimum of ten respondents. The responses from 614 sports fans were taken into consideration in the data analysis – it was enough to perform the factor analysis and regression analyses to examine the quantitative data. The appropriate sample size was all the more important as it allowed generalisability of the quantitative findings. At the data-analysis stage Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed to validate the measurement scales (Lee et al. 2011); the internal consistency of the scales was tested through calculating the Chronbach's alpha reliability coefficients (the details of the analysis are presented in Chapter V). Finally, the validity and reliability of the survey findings were confirmed through the use of the third stage of research – qualitative interviews with fans.

In two qualitative stages of this study – exploratory qualitative interviews with the sports industry experts and confirmatory interviews with sports fans – the researcher followed a number of procedures to enhance the quality of the findings. As Patton (1990) emphasised, the readers themselves judge the quality of the research but the researcher needs to thoroughly report the details of the data-collection and analysis process to enable them to do it.

To improve the reliability or – as suggested by Collis and Hussey (2003) – authenticity of qualitative findings during data collection in addition to making notes, the researcher used a digital recorder. Audio-recording of interviews helped to enhance the accuracy of the data gathered (Brink 1993). During interviews the researcher tried not to suggest answers; therefore, prompts were given to the interviewees only when they had problems with formulating answers or when a particular question

seemed not to be clear; otherwise, they were used to ensure that the interviewees did not want to add anything to what they had just said. Although in the case of the qualitative methodology the reliability is understood in a slightly different way than in the quantitative methodology and, as mentioned above, replication is difficult, it is important the research report was a detailed description of the qualitative processes 'thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results' (Shenton 2004: 71).

The procedures presented below were undertaken with the aim of increasing validity of qualitative findings. In both qualitative stages of research pilot interviews were used to test the interview schedule and to ensure that the questions would be interpreted unequivocally. Triangulation of data sources, i.e. multiple key informants – sports marketing experts and sports fans, allowed the researcher to gain an insight into and compare the points of view and experiences of a range of individuals; they all contributed to a rich picture of the phenomenon of global sport brands (Shenton 2004). Prior to the interviews all participants received the participant information sheet where it was clearly stated that they could refuse to participate in the study and that they had the right to withdraw from it at any point without providing an explanation. As suggested by Shenton this tactic helps 'to ensure honesty in informants' (2004: 66). The participant information sheet also included information about the study, the purpose of the interview, what would happen with the data gathered, etc. In this way the researcher intended to increase validity of responses (Brink 1993). It is recommended that the research process should be appraised as it develops. A qualitative investigator can do it by evaluating the nature of his or her involvement in this process. Therefore, the researcher made notes after each interview, which facilitated reflecting on her feelings about the conducted interview and on what could be improved in subsequent ones (e.g. the researcher's performance, the way of formulating some questions). Additionally, the researcher listened to some taped interviews with the purpose of evaluating her own role in the interviews (King 2004). In order to further evaluate the research process Shenton (2004) suggested seeking outside expertise in debriefing sessions with the investigator's superiors as one mean of widening the vision of the investigator through others' perceptions. In the case of this study the meetings with the Director of Studies gave the researcher the opportunity to discuss her interpretations of the collected data. Finally, during the data analysis, validity was substantiated by the process of constant comparison of the interview transcripts that facilitated understanding of the meaning of the interview data and identifying emerging themes.

7. Conclusions

This chapter was aimed at providing a detailed description of the methodology undertaken across this study, with a focus on a rigour maintained during its planning and implementation.

The researcher attempted to explain various phases of research and data-collection techniques used at each stage. The emphasis was put on the logical justification of each research phase stemming from the objectives of the research. The chapter ended with an outline of the data-analysis techniques

the results of which will be discussed in detail in the next chapters. The methodology described represents a mixed-method approach to examining the factors guiding international (i.e. Polish) fans' choice of a favourite global sports team brand and the consequences of such a fan's decision for this team brand.

The study consisted of three stages. The first qualitative one was undertaken with the aim of the theory development on the basis of the qualitative data gained in the interviews with experts in branding. The value of this research stage is that its findings were empirically grounded in the social reality. Having undertaken a careful analysis of the data from semi-structured interviews with brand experts and having reviewed the subject literature, the model of global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes was hypothesised. The model was then tested in the second quantitative stage of the study, among Polish fans of various global sports teams (in the majority football, NBA and Formula 1). The rigorous development of a survey instrument was based on the initial study findings that laid a theoretical foundation to the survey item generation. The third stage of semi-structured interviews with a small sample of Polish sports team fans helped to validate the survey findings and to establish a final model of global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes.

The mixed-method approach allowed the researcher to triangulate various methodologies and data sources, which facilitated overcoming drawbacks of a single-method approach – limited reliability and applicability of the qualitative, and low validity of the quantitative, findings. What is equally important, however, and directly linked to the study's overriding research aim, a mixed-method approach by providing rich qualitative data and generalisable quantitative findings contributed to a holistic picture of the phenomenon under study (i.e. global sports team brands).

Chapter IV: Model development

Overview

This chapter provides details on the hypothesised model development process and outlines the variables included in the model based on the findings of the initial stage of the research (exploratory interview data and review of the literature). Possible relationships between the variables in the model are also formed within this chapter.

1. The choice of constructs in the initial conceptual model

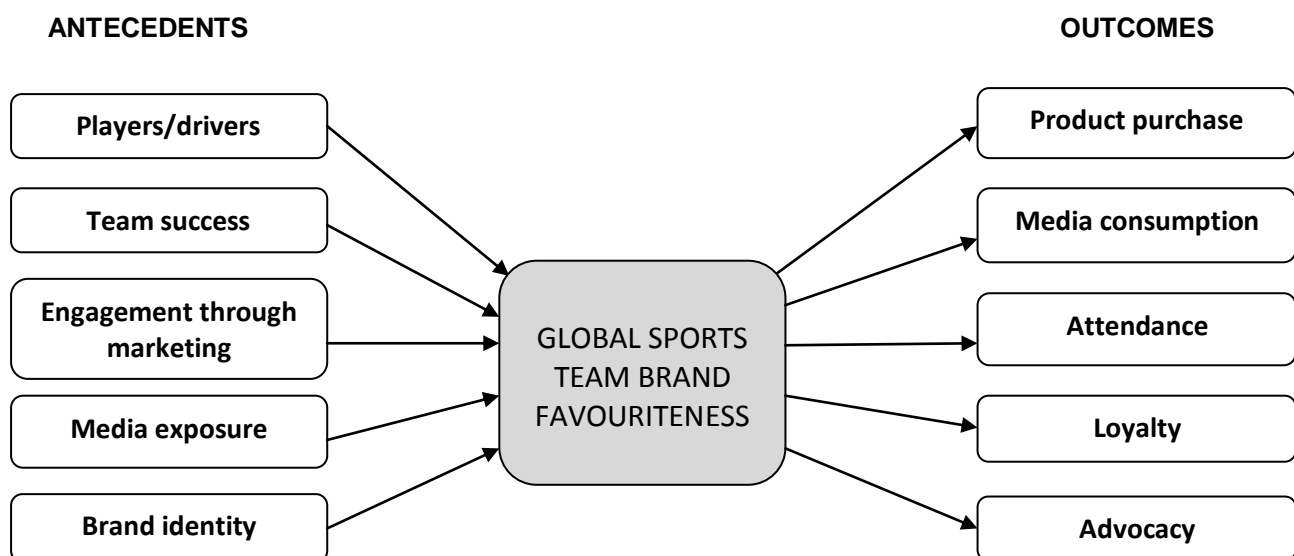
The variables in the initial model of antecedents and outcomes of global sports team brand favouriteness were incorporated based on the interviews with sports branding/marketing experts (the first stage of data collection) and the subject literature. The majority of the eleven variables were included based on both – interview data and the literature; however, two variables – advocacy and global sports team brand favouriteness – only on the basis of interviews and one (loyalty) was derived from the literature.

As a result of the interview data analysis, a considerable list of variables was established. Therefore, a decision to reduce the number of variables was made. It was first of all due to the fact that the researcher aimed at establishing a parsimonious model in her study, which would retain predictive power with as few variables as possible. Furthermore, it was also taken into consideration that a larger number of variables would impact questionnaire length (by influencing the number of items necessary to measure each variable) and might make completing the questionnaire unmanageable. According to existing research, the minimum of three items per variable is acceptable. Cook et al. (1981) claimed that internal consistency reliability is ensured with 'as few as three items' (cited in Hinkin 1995: 972). The questionnaire scales in this study contained at least four items. Finally, the theory links the overall number of items in the questionnaire to the number of responses per each item necessary to conduct factor analysis, and that was another guideline taken into consideration at the stage of model construction. The more items, the larger a sample of respondents is needed to complete the questionnaire. According to a rule of thumb, the item-to-subject ratio should be at least 10:1 (Nunnally 1978 cited in Osborne and Costello 2004; Atkinson 2007: 618) meaning a minimum of ten individuals to one questionnaire item (some researchers recommend even a minimum ratio of 20:1 – Costello and Osborne 2005). Hence, with more variables in the model and, subsequently, more items to be included in the questionnaire, a larger number of responses would have to be collected. This also guided the researcher's decision to reduce the number of variables in the initial model.

In order to select the minimum possible number of variables several steps were taken. The researcher used her own personal judgement and sought advice from sports marketing researchers in order to

finalise the list of variables. As demonstrated in past research other researchers/experts may be involved in the decision of which variables to include/exclude from the set retained for further analyses (e.g. Vickers, Rees and Birkin 2005; Edbring, Lehner and Mont 2016). At that stage a few variables were combined into one variable, i.e. the brand story and history/heritage variables were subsumed into the already existing brand identity variable. The two variables represent those elements that are often incorporated in a team's identity and often serve as a basis for its establishment. Furthermore, the following two variables were excluded from the initial set: 'belonging to the sports brand category' (from a list of potential antecedents) and 'sponsorship revenue' (from the outcome variables). The reasons for excluding both variables were different. The former was not taken into account as it was not considered to be as important as other antecedents (it is an inherent feature of all sports brands, independent of team-management endeavours). The latter was excluded following the expert's suggestion of keeping only those outcome variables that were most applicable to be sports fan surveyed in the next stage of research; as fans do not have a direct impact on the benefits that sponsoring brings to a team (contrary to, for instance, the attendance variable) it was not incorporated into the initial model. Figure 2 below displays the initial conceptual model.

Figure 2: The initial model of global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes



1.1. Hypotheses generation

As emphasised earlier (Chapter III section 1) the hypotheses were developed at the end of the exploratory phase of this research in the course of the inductive process. The information gathered at that stage allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon of global sports team brands to get a new insight into it (which is one of the reasons behind conducting exploratory research), and finally to generate research hypotheses.

The combination of the interview data supported by the information from existing literature served the development of a hypothesised model of global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes. In the case of this study the researcher did not feel that past literature alone was sufficient to develop meaningful hypotheses. The existing research provided information about possible motivations and consequences behind fans' support for sports teams in general. However, the researcher recognised that, while it is useful, it would not be enough to clarify a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of globalisation of sports team brands, and to develop a comprehensive and viable theoretical framework (Hair et al. 2007; Sekaran and Bougie 2010; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). Therefore, the qualitative interviews with the experts were conducted in order to collect in-depth information about the problem. The interviews with experts, next to the literature, are often used as a source of knowledge in the exploratory phase of research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). In the final part of this stage, using learning from the interviews and literature – based on the patterns that emerged from the interview data, supported by the available information from past research – the researcher hypothesised a model of brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes and formulated hypotheses for subsequent testing (Sekaran and Bougie 2010).

Another reason why the researcher used the interview data to develop hypotheses was that she attempted to make her study relevant to practice (Panda and Gupta 2014; Toffel 2016). Employing a practitioner perspective in the exploratory phase allowed the researcher to formulate the hypotheses well grounded not only in the literature but also in reality as recommended by Toffel (2016: 8).

2. Constructs included in the conceptual model

2.1. Central variable: Global sports team brand favouriteness

This variable is central to the research aims of this study, which intends to examine what makes a particular global sports team brand a favourite global team brand for fans throughout the world and how such a brand benefits from having a global fan base.

As the researcher learnt from the interviews, a global sports team brand is a team brand that is 'recognised everywhere in the world as one of the best in its field' (using the words of the president of the global communications agency) and 'accepted internationally' (as formulated by a director of the sports marketing research company). A distinct feature of a strong global sports team brand is its ability to connect emotionally with fans on a global basis. The researcher in this study has argued that in the case of fans' favourite sports team brands this connection is more emotionally marked than in the case of other types of brand. Support for those teams by their fans involves 'a huge emotional investment', claimed an owner of the publishing company. 'You don't sit up and wait for Coca-Cola's financial results to be announced and you don't feel heartily disappointed, unless you are a shareholder, when they haven't done well,' he said. Sports fans, though, follow the results of their

favourite teams – either watching matches live or accessing them through various media channels. Obviously, for a brand to be successful it needs to have an effect on people's emotions. As the majority of interviews shows, the principles behind global brands of all types are on the whole the same. However, there is a greater emotional – inherent – factor associated with sports brands that helps to establish that relationship with fans, whereas, according to a head of CRM at the football team, other brands need to develop it 'through consumption of their products, the way in which they position their products, the way in which they continuously talk ... about their products'. He added: '... we're in a lucky position because the nature of the relationship that we have with our [fans] means that it's far more emotional as a starting point.' When a sports team establishes a strong emotional connection, it may become a favourite brand for fans in different countries.

The relationship between fans and their favourite sports team brands received some attention during the interviews, which led the researcher to exploring it closer and to introducing the term brand favouriteness to describe this relationship.

Interview evidence suggests that, in the opinion of practitioners, people make a decision of choosing a brand as their favourite based on emotions. A president of the global communications agency pointed that people perceive a particular brand as their favourite when they 'like that brand and need it more than other brands'. In the case of each brand – sports and non-sports – these are emotions that decide to what extent it stands out from the crowd of other brands in its category; to what extent people perceive it as close to them and valued so that it becomes their favourite brand. A brand marketing director described the process by which a particular brand becomes a favourite brand for an individual or for a group of people as follows:

... a brand is a product or service whose values or features resonate ... with me or a group of people in a positive way. And clearly, from the marketing perspective, that means that when you feel that this product or service resonates with you, then obviously you're gonna have more affinity with it over other products and services, to want to go and buy or be part of or consume that particular product or service 'cause you like it best of all.

Hence, it stems from the interviews that the relationship between consumers and their favourite brands is grounded in emotions. As such brand favouriteness includes the emotional aspect, and refers to a feeling or a positive attitude that the consumer develops towards that favourite brand. The abovementioned quotation illustrates also that brand favouriteness is developed in relation to other brands in the same category.

Brand favouriteness develops towards a specific brand – one brand in the category – that people find particularly appealing, that 'resonate[s]' with them, a consumer's 'first choice' as stated by one interviewee. If within one brand category there is only one favourite brand that is preferred over other brands this implies that the others are not favourite. In other words, a brand can be either one's favourite or not.

The extent to which a particular brand is able to attract fans so that they perceive it as their favourite can be, according to some interviewees, a measure of brand strength. The abovementioned brand marketing director stated that whether people consider a particular brand as their favourite brand is one of the ways of measuring how strong a brand is:

You can tell how strong the brand is for instance based on top of mind awareness which is when you talk about something, someone will instantly tell you the name of something ... But this is not enough, as you can be aware of many brands. So then over time you can measure how they feel about a particular brand ... whether it's their favourite.

Consumers' favourite brands are incorporated as a vital element into consumers' lives that illustrates the example of sports team brands: 'Brands can market themselves and pitch themselves to the right demographic. And that is what the successful teams do: they pitch themselves at the right demographic, with the right set of values, [so] that they automatically become [the] fans' first choice, [the] favourites, become part of their lifestyles.' Moreover, similarly to the constructs such as brand love or identification, brand favouriteness can lead to desirable outcomes for the brand. As mentioned above, developing a positive attitude towards a favourite brand can even lead to consumption decisions ('when you feel that this product or service resonates with you ... you're gonna ... go and buy or be part of or consume that particular product or service 'cause you like it best of all').

To sum up, the researcher has introduced the term 'global sports team brand favouriteness' to describe the particular feeling that a sports fan has towards his or her favourite global sports team brand, i.e. the global sports team brand that he or she chooses over other similar brands as the one that is particularly close to him or her. Brand 'favouriteness' manifests in fans' every-day routine i.e. who live their favourite brand on a day-to-day basis. Based on the interviews, the 'favouriteness' of global sports team brands was included as a central variable in the model.

Brand favouriteness is a new and distinct construct. Table 3 below summarises the main differences between brand favouriteness and popular constructs which describe consumer-brand relationships.

Table 3: How brand favouriteness differs from other theoretical constructs?

Concept	Definition	Differences
Brand identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'a consumer's perceived state of oneness with a brand' (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012: 407) • 'a customer's psychological state of perceiving, feeling, and valuing his or her belongingness with a brand' (Lam et al. 2010: 130) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrary to brand favouriteness, the oneness or similarity with a brand is a condition under which people decide which brand they identify with (Lam et al. 2010; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen 2012). On the other hand, to choose a brand as favourite an individual does not need to perceive a similarity between the brand and himself/herself. He/she simply needs to like/prefer it – more than other brands in the same category. • Unlike in the case of a favourite brand, the characteristics of brand that people identify with are incorporated into one's self-identity; people use it primarily to fulfil their self-definitional needs (Elbedweihy and

		<p>Jayawardhena 2012; Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike in the case of brand favouriteness there are various levels of brand identification – from low to moderate to high. Hence, the extent people identify with brands varies.
Brand loyalty	<p>‘a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, <i>despite</i> situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior’ (Oliver 1999: 34)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand favouriteness highlights emotions, a feeling towards a brand and does not refer to any specific consumer behaviours. On the other hand, in addition to the attitudinal, the behavioural aspect of loyalty is evident: ‘brand loyalty develops from actual buying and usage of the product or brand’ (Asamoah 2014: 123); loyalty covers not only loyal attitudes but also loyal repeat behaviours. • Unlike in the case of brand favouriteness there are various degrees of loyalty based on which it is possible to distinguish between various types of consumers (e.g. Aaker 1991; Dick and Basu 1994).
Brand advocacy	<p>Du, Bhattacharya and Sen (2007) saw brand advocacy as covering behaviours such as trying new products, engaging in favourable word-of-mouth and displaying greater resilience to negative information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinction between brand favouriteness and brand advocacy is explicit. According to Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013), ‘brand advocacy’ represents constructs known as behavioural consequences of consumer-brand relationships. On the other hand, there is a group of constructs describing consumer-brand relationships such as brand love or identification; similarly brand favouriteness directly refers to the brand-consumer relationship. So while brand favouriteness is central to a brand-customer relationship, brand advocacy is one of the possible consequences of such relationships.
Brand engagement	<p>‘the level of an individual customer’s motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterised by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions’ (Hollebeek 2011: 790)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction – engagement emerges ‘from two-way interactions between relevant engagement subject(s) and object(s)’ (Hollebeek 2011: 787); a two-way interaction/communication (interactive relationship between a brand and a customer) does not constitute the essence of brand favouriteness. • The behavioural aspect of the concept – as opposed to brand favouriteness. • Engagement levels – brand engagement, as opposed to brand favouriteness, ‘may exist at different intensities’ that ‘generate distinct behavioural outcomes’ (Hollebeek 2011: 787–788).

One of the constructs mentioned in the table above is brand identification. Specifically in the sports team context team identification is understood as ‘... the extent to which a fan feels a psychological connection to a team and the team’s performances are viewed as self-relevant’ (Wann 2006b: 332) or ‘the degree to which a fan defines him/herself by the same attribute that defines the sport team’ (Mahony 1995 cited in Koo 2009: 28).

All of the abovementioned definitions of identification used in and outside the sports context highlight a ‘oneness’ with the brand. It seems then that a key for team identification to take place is an individual’s perception of oneness or similarity with the team (or its brand). Therefore, fans are drawn to a team which they perceive as possessing ‘the attributes they assign to their own self-concepts’ (Fink et al. 2009: 143). For instance, people may be drawn to their local sports team based on a shared geographic location (Fisher 1998). Brand favouriteness, on the other hand, does not assume a oneness with the team brand – a given team brand becomes favourite to a fan not necessarily based on its perceived similarity but because it is particularly valued and liked by him or her. This may explain why identification refers to a *oneness with* the team brand (Herda and Lavelle 2015), whereas brand favouriteness to a particular *attitude towards* the team brand which fans do not seek to integrate with in a sense typical for identification.

It is evident that identification puts emphasis on fans’ usage of team brands to construct their own identities, to define themselves – in other words ‘to satisfy[ing] one or more of their self-definitional needs’ (Elbedweihi and Jayawardhena 2012: 1). Highly identified fans define themselves in terms of a specific sports team they are drawn to. They are not only ‘fans’ – they ‘believe that being a “fan” is an important part of who they are’ (Stevens and Rosenberger 2012: 59). As a consequence, whatever happens to the team – success or failure – they treat it as it happened to them (Wann and Branscombe 1990; Fisher 1998). Whereas fulfilment of an individual’s self-definitional needs is not at the core of the relationship established with a favourite sports team brand. Brand favouriteness develops when the fan likes a specific team more than other teams in the same category and feels it (or its brand) is superior to them (or their brands) – best of all. Hence, it can be assumed that fans who develop brand favouriteness towards their teams may not take their on-field performance personally.

Finally, fans identify with their teams at various levels, which explains their different behavioural responses (for instance team-related consumption, the die-hard and fair-weather fans phenomenon), and which facilitates fans’ segmentation (Wann and Branscombe 1993; Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002a; Koch and Wann 2013) (see Chapter II section 1.4.3). On the other hand, brand favouriteness is an emotion that does not exist at different levels and comes along only with one level of intensity (i.e. high). Potentially, levels of brand favouriteness would allow the segmentation of consumers, whereas the fact they cannot be measured may limit the construct’s value as a moderating or mediating variable.

The concept of brand favouriteness introduced in this study was derived solely from the interview data not from the existing literature which, however, offers some suggestions on how to define one's favourite brand. 'The favourite brand' is the one whose name is kept at the top of the choice possibilities in a particular brand category (West, Ford and Ibrahim 2015: 6–7). Ries and Trout (2001 cited in West, Ford and Ibrahim 2015) stated that this selection is made before a consumption behaviour takes place. The aim of each brand is to occupy the top rung of the ladder of possible brand choices (Ries and Trout 2001) which – in the case of sports team brands – is occupied by the team brand that the fan has chosen as the best, or his or her favourite brand (West, Ford and Ibrahim 2015). For some people a favourite brand is 'the "best brand" for their needs'; for others it does not need to be the 'best brand' – it is enough when it is satisfactory (Blythe 2014: 92). Wallström, Steyn and Pitt (2010), in their study of beauty care product brands, define a favourite brand partly through a brand preference concept: 'your favorite brand of beauty care product is the one you particularly like or favor, or give preference to over similar brands' (2010: 231). The authors treated a favourite brand and a preferred brand evenly, while this is not always the case. According to the MacmillanDictionary.com, 'to prefer' means 'to like or want someone or something more than someone or something else', while 'your *favourite* person or thing of a particular kind is the one that you like the best'. This differentiation is justified if one takes into consideration the relationship between a sports fan and his favourite team – 'favourite' assumes that in the case of a sports team one refers to a single team that is liked best of all teams. The feelings towards a 'preferred' team are usually described in the context of other teams – in comparison to another team it becomes clear which team is someone's preferred one. Ben-Porat, in his sociological study of Israeli fans of English football teams, stated that for those fans 'their' English football team is like 'an "overseas sweetheart", far away but close to the heart' (2000: 344), implying that only a single team may be described in such a way. Hognestad noted that about half of the surveyed Norwegian fans of English football teams, in addition to being a fan of those teams, 'admit[ted] to nourishing sympathies' with other football teams (2006: 453). Nevertheless, it seems that this was not too strong a relationship, as 76 per cent stated that they limited themselves to watching their second team on television, while 24 per cent argued that their interest resulted from the fact that they had spent holidays in the city where the team is based or had family residing there. On the other hand, the relationship between those fans and their favourite English teams was based on much stronger fundamentals and was much more intense (for instance, the surveyed fans were members of their favourite English football team fan clubs).

However, although 'favouriteness' and preference do not mean the same – every favourite brand is a preferred brand, but not every preferred brand must be a favourite brand – for the purpose of this study (i.e. development of a 'favouriteness' measurement scale) the researcher considers both concepts to be relatively close. This is particularly the case as some researchers have considered brand preference to be 'a measure of ... experienced brand strength ... capturing the sum of a brand's assets' (Anselmsson, Johansson and Persson 2008: 66). Wallström, Steyn and Pitt (2010) stated that favourable brand preferences are created as a result of strong connections of fans with brands. This corresponds with the abovementioned opinion of some interviewees, who suggested that a sports team brand that particularly remains close to their fans' hearts becomes a favourite one for them –

also on a global basis. Therefore, in the light of the lack of literature on brand 'favouriteness' satisfying the purpose of this study, the researcher has based the 'favouriteness' scale on the available preference scale. Questions 2 to 4 in this section were adapted from the sports preference scale (Yoon and Choi 2005), as it seems to be more relevant than other existing brand preference scales. Question 1 was created to assess the degree of overall brand 'favouriteness'.

2.2. Global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents

2.2.1. Players/drivers

The importance of athletes within any sports team is straightforward – teams' on-the-field results depend very much on players; and a good driver is an important asset of the team, firstly because he helps to achieve good sports results. When these two come together – athletes and sports results – the team is perceived as more attractive. Hence, teams spend a considerable part of their revenue, in the words of an interviewed director of the sports marketing consultancy 1, 'to be able to buy the best players and keep the best players and compete to purchase the best players because the best players mean success on a pitch'.

Data gathered during interviews suggest that whilst players are important for the team brand, interviewees differently evaluated this importance. Those interviewees who claimed that athletes are crucial in building brand status described such an athlete in many different ways: as a skilful athlete; as a star player, not necessarily possessing great skills but having 'marketability' instead; as a particularly accessible, friendly person who would serve as an example of behaviour for teenagers; and finally as an overseas player from a country the team is targeting. Other interviewees saw players or drivers as helpful, but considered that teams should not base their brand strategy on them: 'teams have to build a base for themselves that is not dependent on who is driving for them, who is playing for them,' suggested a commercial manager of the Formula 1 team. In his opinion athletes tend to move between teams and may take the brand equity with them.

The conducted interviews clearly showed that sports skills are only one criterion in the evaluation of the importance and usefulness of players or drivers for global teams. This demonstrates that nowadays a sports team is not only a group of athletes, but also a product. This opinion was captured well by the football team's head of CRM: 'When we think of any sports brand now it's no longer ... that one-dimensional connection. So it isn't purely about what goes on with eleven players on the pitch. So if you think about [our team] as a brand, we have many, many facets and assets that we present to our fans.' Athletes' on-the-field performance during a contest, a match or a race is not all – in the case of global sports teams it is only one dimension of those players or drivers. Equally important is what happens with them off-the-field and how they contribute to other facets of their team brand. Therefore, players or drivers must not only be skilful but also demonstrate the abovementioned marketability that determines their commercial usefulness for the team. The director of the sports marketing research

company defined it as follows: '[Athletes] need to be the ones that children wanna put their pictures on the wall, people wanna buy scarves with their pictures on ... buy shirts with their name on the back.'

A slightly different view of the off-the-field usefulness of athletes composing a sports team was put forward by the PR consultancy director, who claimed that not all team members must possess commercial value as each of them has a varying role to perform on and off the pitch. He illustrated it using an example of a football team: '... you need a squad. ... It's not about eleven players in football, it's about twenty-five players and in that twenty-five players you need – to be successful – you need three or four world class players. And those three or four world class players need to have marketability.' Many international teams would wish to sign an athlete with global personality, but, as was stressed by some interviewees, in sport in general there is a small number of such individuals. For instance, in football, a truly global sport, 'There [are] only one or two people who have a global impact beyond territory, and [they are] Rooney, David Beckham and maybe Lionel Messi ... very, very, very few,' said the football team commercial director.

The recruitment of players or drivers, overseas in particular, may be determined by a wider team brand strategy and result from its expansion into particular regions of the world. Building a team on the basis of international players or drivers clearly demonstrates that it wants to be perceived as global. This is illustrated in a quote from the PR consultancy director:

At the end of the day it comes down to the money. And so it's very, very important that people in top flight sport are appealing to [the] international marketplace. ... that's why big international teams, whether they be Formula 1 teams, or whether they be football teams, are employing or bringing on into their teams international players. If you are an international [team] ... you've got to have Koreans, you've got to have ... Spaniards for the passion ... you've got to have Italians to make it a truly international [team], because at the end of the day this is what you're selling.

Such a player or driver is often signed in order to attract fans from the country he comes from and, subsequently, sponsors. The commercial manager of the Formula 1 team clearly stated that his team takes into account the nationality of drivers when looking for sponsors.

Incorporating athletes in the team brand strategy may be more sophisticated when, as the head of CRM at the football team said, 'star players help reiterate and confirm the brand values'. In order for this to happen athletes' marketability is not enough – they also need to be adaptable (using the PR consultancy director's words) and to fit in with the team brand. As the head of CRM expressed it, 'the key for the [team] is if it truly wants to stand behind its core values and that, it'd look to recruit players that very much would fit into its brand values. So then you're recruiting players that will help build that consistency and clarity of message.'

The existing literature on sports team brands widely discusses the role of athletes in the teams they represent. Athletes within the team are one of the elements comprising a core sports product (Richelieu 2013). Pifer et al. claimed that they are a distinctive asset of the team brand they are part of: '... players exist to create differences by using their unique abilities to distinguish teams from one

another on and off the field of play' (2015: 89). Therefore, when competing for the best athletes, sports teams take into consideration their contribution both on and off the pitch (Hasaan et al. 2016: 69). Athletes were mentioned among the factors affecting fans' identification with the team. Researchers emphasised the significance of their purely athletic skills and other non-sports assets such as attractiveness: attractiveness of an athlete in the eyes of fans may be a consequence of his or her success and his or her similarity to fans (Wakefield 2007; Wann 2006b). Players' physical attraction and skills were included by Trail and James (2001) among factors impacting spectator consumption behaviour. Spectators often develop an attachment to a particular team owing to a primary emotional attachment to a particular player (Mahony and Moorman 2000; Mahony et al. 2002). According to Hasaan et al., 'a star athlete adds value to the team' (2016: 70) when he or she performs well on the field and enhances the team's popularity. Overall, if athletes operate well and are carefully chosen, the player factor contributes to brand strengthening (Kase et al. 2007).

Existing research has often stressed the role of a star player as a particular type of an athlete especially desired in a squad. Pifer et al. (2015) described star players in terms of their off-the-field (charisma, attractiveness, celebrity status and culture significance) and on-the-field (exceptional athletic skills, leadership qualities and the ability to both contribute to team success and perform well as an individual) characteristics. Several studies proved that players within the team have an impact on the team's brand equity (e.g. Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999; Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005). Pifer et al. (2015) established that star players have particular impact on two vital components of team brand equity: brand awareness and brand image. Therefore, they vitally contribute to generating awareness for their team (Pifer et al. 2015) and are one of the essential connectors that bond fans to sport (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006). Athletes attract fans to sports products 'by their actions, personae, and playing ability' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 57) and are often brands on their own (Kerr and Gladden 2008; Pifer et al. 2015). When they achieve the status of a brand this results in several benefits for the team they are part of – increased team popularity, and subsequently gate revenue, merchandise sales and TV viewership (Hasaan et al. 2016).

Especially in today's globalised and media-driven world where there is a wide expectation of sports spectacle, for a sports property 'to be without a star base can be a serious disadvantage' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 57). High-profile athletes in a team can help it to reach global status, as illustrated by the international development of Real Madrid's brand: 'The player recruiting policy of Real Madrid reinforced the international image of the [team] and its brand' (Urrutia 2005 cited in Kase et al. 2007: 221). Star players affect a team's foreign brand equity, transforming their status to global (Kerr and Gladden 2008; Pyun, Kwon and Lee 2011). They are vital for teams trying to expand their brands into the global marketplace as they lead to an increase in the media exposure of a team's brand in a particular country and at the same time fans' attention (Chanavat and Bodet 2009: 474). Kerr and Gladden suggested that a star player can 'boost a team's foreign brand equity' acting as ambassador, magician or icon (2008: 64). Kerr and Gladden's icons are the same global personalities that were discussed by one of the abovementioned interviewees – each team manager would wish to recruit

them but there are just a few such athletes in global sport. The role of such individuals as Michael Jordan and David Beckham has been so overwhelming that they are considered to have celebrity status and they appeal not only to sports fans across the world but also to fans of popular culture in general. Magicians (Kerr and Gladden 2008), on the other hand, manifest themselves to the world when they act in a particularly outstanding way on the pitch. Owing to their individual sport performance they have a chance to attract global fans' attention even to a sports team that previously had low awareness. Often this interest is short term; nevertheless some sports fans, having learned about a particular player and a team, may want to continue to follow them. Finally, a player having ambassador status (Kerr and Gladden 2008) brings the attention of fans from his or her home country to the team he or she represents. Such players represent both their team and their home country. It is a common practice of especially teams with international expansion plans to sign players from a particular country as they bring their fan base with them and enhance team brand value (Kerr and Emery 2016). The recruitment of international basketball players from e.g. Argentina, Brazil, China, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Russia, Serbia and Spain to the NBA teams helped not only the teams but also the whole NBA league and basketball as a sports discipline to achieve global reach (Richelieu 2013: 413). In football EPL teams have recruited Asian football players in order to attract fans from their home countries. For instance, Chinese players Sun Jihai and Zheng Zhi signed contracts with Manchester City and Charlton Athletic respectively to become regular players in their teams (Jingbo, Zhou and Pritchard 2010: 379–380).

Several studies have demonstrated the extent to which the player factor affects the support of overseas fans of strong, globally recognised teams. Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) found that the strength of some English teams (Liverpool FC, Manchester United, Chelsea FC and Arsenal FC) in the French and Chinese markets respectively is determined, among other things, by the star player factor. A native player is likely to boost support for European football teams among fans in China, Korea and Japan (Chadwick 2007). Some overseas fans of Liverpool FC and Ajax FC decided to support them owing to the fact that there was a player in their squads who they found particularly appealing: it was either a star player or a player from the home country of the surveyed fans (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). In addition, past studies have shown that for some fans it is not enough if a player possesses star status or comes from their home country; it is also necessary that he or she fits into his or her team. For example, Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) showed that for some French and Chinese football fans talking about their perceptions of the 'Big Four' EPL teams, 'The players' images and those of their new [teams] must also fit' (2009: 474); 'otherwise one player can represent a reason for not liking or even disliking a team' (2010: 60).

Well-chosen athletes translate to specific teams' financial profits. The *Galácticos* era saw a notable relationship between Real Madrid's marketing revenues and its player recruitment: 'the incorporation of every new star player coincided with an increase in marketing revenue' (Kase et al. 2007: 220) and during five seasons it rose from 39.1 million euros in 2000–01 to 116.8 million euros in 2004–05 (Kase

et al. 2007: 221). The importance that teams attach to players is illustrated by the proportion of their budgets spent on player transfers and wages. According to Deloitte, within the 'Big Five' European football leagues in the 2014–15 season, aggregate wage expenditure increased by 10 per cent and surpassed €7.4 billion. And in the Premier League teams in the 2014–15 season the combined gross transfer expenditure reached a record high of £1.1 billion, with 57 per cent of this sum spent on signing players from overseas teams (Deloitte 2016b). Pifer et al. (2015), referring to the work of Leeds and Von Allmen (2013), emphasised that in North America, too, a large part of teams' revenue is invested in players: 'In American leagues like the NBA, [the] MLB, and [the] NFL, close to 50% of league revenues are also shared with the athletes, and each year vital draft picks are expended with the expectation that selected players will contribute to a team's performance' (2015: 89).

However, regardless of how significant the impact of athletes on their teams is, several researchers have suggested that overestimating players' power may have some drawbacks. Star power, from the sports team perspective, is temporary in the way that it temporarily serves the team brand. The volatility of some athletes within a team means that 'they do not represent long-term assets for the brands' (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 64). Once players or drivers move to another team they may take with them those of their fans who favour the athlete over the team. A number of works examining overseas fans' attitudes towards their favourite foreign-based team demonstrated that fans often admitted that if their favourite player left his current team, which they supported at that time, there was a possibility that they would start supporting the other team – even if that was the current one's main rival (Bodet and Chanavat 2010; Kerr and Emery 2011; Hasaan et al. 2016). A common example of the implications of a player transfer was David Beckham's transfer from Manchester United to Real Madrid. It was estimated that it led 5 million Asian Manchester United fans to change their allegiance to the Spanish team. This had several implications, e.g. the number of replica Real Madrid jerseys increased from 1 million to 3 million within a year of the transfer; and, in order to meet the expectations of their viewers, Japanese television broadcasters decided to show Spanish League matches (Kerr and Gladden 2008).

Based on the interviews and literature review findings it was clear that a concept of the players/drivers who are part of the team is definitely not uniform as there are a few types of players that may be used by the teams to attract fans, i.e. star players/drivers or skilful players/drivers or native players/drivers from the home country of the team's fans. As the researcher discovered from the interviews, such players, perceived by fans as particularly appealing, should contribute greatly to the fans' decision to name a particular global sports team their favourite. Hence, the players/drivers variable was included in the brand favouriteness model as an essential antecedent and it was hypothesised that the following relationship between this antecedent and a global sports team brand exists:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between players/drivers and global sports team brand favouriteness.

This variable was difficult to operationalise, as the role of athletes in teams is complex as emphasised above. To the researcher's knowledge, the scales that existed in the literature to measure the player

concept were not suitable to measure this multifaceted and ambiguous variable. The brand-new scale employed in this study reflects the complex nature of the variable. The questionnaire items were generated to reflect the different types of player indicated by the interviewees, described in the subject literature and present in global sports teams.

2.2.2. Team success

Team sports success was discussed at some stage by almost all interviewed experts. In general, all of them emphasised its essential impact on the position of sports team brands. They differed only in regard to the extent to which they considered it to be the most decisive factor.

Some interviewees indicated that team success, understood as a winning record, is the most important global brand component. In the opinion of the director of the sports marketing research company, it is vital for team brand status and a common feature of strong global brands: 'Success is ... the key to the strength of the brand. You very rarely get a sports team which is not successful on the field ... which becomes a global brand.' For a few of the interviewed experts, athletic success is a primary antecedent from which everything else starts. For instance, it was clear to the director of the sports marketing consultancy 1: '... the prerequisite for development of any sports team brand is success on a pitch. You can't have a brand that's global without success on a pitch.' According to the commercial manager of the Formula 1 team, too, it is a 'defining facet' and often dominates over other antecedents: 'Generally performance will drive everything ... the number of people who watch you, the number of people who follow you and then from there the amount of sponsorship you can generate, the amount of revenue and it just snowballs from there... That's what drives team brands.' Other interviewees considered that fans value success over other antecedents. The director of the sports marketing research company noted: 'in sports team brands ... success is obviously the key to the strength of the brand. ... If there is no success then people look for other things. But if there is a lot of success people forgive other things as well.'

The interviewed experts agreed that success is most attractive for fans based outside the domestic market of a particular team. Often it is not until people hear about the team's on-field success that they actually learn that it exists. The commercial director of the football team noted: 'I think football people in the UK know what [my team] brand values are and that is playing attractive, attacking football, entertaining ... football. I think outside the UK that becomes weaker and weaker and weaker and people are more interested in success and whether you are in the Champions League or whether you are winning.' The researcher at the sports marketing research company claimed that those overseas fans who are particularly attracted to athletic success are fans from the markets where there is no successful team in a particular sport (e.g. in football). Hence, they look for successful teams in other markets; thus, global sports teams are those that usually meet fans' expectations and fulfil their natural need of being associated with success. 'People just want to feel they support something meaningful; they support someone who is successful. When we look at the greatest global brands I don't think we find [even] one brand that is not successful in a particular sport,' said the researcher at the sports marketing research company. Other interviewees expressed similar opinions: 'They [fans] wanna

follow winners' (the commercial director of the football team); 'no fan wants to follow a team that's rubbish' (the brand marketing director).

So, most of the interviewees were aware that sports results influence a sports team brand, and considered sports success to be an important but not decisive component of a global team brand: 'Winning and losing isn't the only component of the brand,' said the commercial director of the football team. Performance can be beneficial to a brand if it is used properly and if existing and potential fans are informed about it. Overseas fans find out about team success from the media, therefore good on-field results do not defend themselves – it is crucial to inform the wider audience about them, so that the team can fully capitalise on them. 'Big success helps,' the commercial director of the football team said, 'But if fans don't know that you won anything, it's irrelevant that you won ... If someone in Nigeria, someone in Lagos doesn't know that Juventus is a great Italian [team] and has never seen it, it's irrelevant if Juventus has won anything.'

Interestingly, opposing the view of those experts who perceive success as being crucial to team brand development, the director of the sports marketing consultancy 2 claimed that it does not necessarily lead to setting up a brand as 'you can be successful as a team but not be a brand'. A few interviewees also argued that some fans remain faithful to their teams despite on-field failures, because their emotional connection with the team is strong enough: '... success is definitely an element but there is the emotional side ... Even if your team is not performing well, unless you get completely fed up with it, you keep supporting it,' stated the associate at the sports consultancy. Besides, other experts underlined the importance of style of play in the eyes of fans, which takes on particular significance when the team does not win. The PR consultancy director explained it as follows: '... it's not important that you win, it's how you play the game ... and some teams in England have that ... methodology about how they go about their game. So, if they play the right way and achieve success, that's fantastic, but if they play the right way and don't achieve success, at least their [fans] have been entertained.'

The opinion that reconciles the abovementioned views on sports success is that of the global communications agency president, for whom team performance is the most important brand component provided that it is evaluated 'not at every moment but in time': 'Sporting history' – using his words – not current success, determines the position of a team brand.

Much of the work published sees the influence of the team's on-the-field performance on its off-the-field activities. This results from the specific character of sports brands compared with non-sports brands, and affects their planning, building and management. Chadwick (2006: 153) noted: 'Sports organizations remain product-led, which means that the focus and success of the marketing effort off the field is largely determined by what happens on the field.' The role of the on-field performance of sports teams is undeniable as, according to some researchers, winning, or at least giving the perception of winning, has a positive effect on merchandise sales, game attendance (and subsequently ticket sales, season ticket renewals, etc.) and media exposure (Gladden and Milne 1999; Irwin, Zwick and Sutton 1999; Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005; Hamil 2008; Kerr and Emery

2016). As a result of athletic success, team brand value grows – from both the marketing and the financial perspectives (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005). Several studies have shown that athletic success affects team brand equity (e.g. Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999).

Fans usually prefer to support winning teams (Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; End et al. 2002; Mahony, Howard and Madrigal 2000; Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005). The vicarious achievement defined as the need for social prestige, self-esteem and a sense of empowerment that fans receive when they associate with a successful team is a primary psychological motive of team identification (Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002a). Owing to their team's on-field success, its fans 'bask in the reflected glory' – they feel as if they themselves were winners. The fact that they treat the team's victory as theirs is reflected in the way they talk about it ('we won') and in the way they demonstrate it to others by dressing in their team's colours (Cialdini et al. 1976). So, 'It is no surprise that [teams] such as the New York Yankees, Manchester United and the Los Angeles Lakers also have the largest supporter base. A team that consistently loses will have difficulty attracting large crowds' (Westerbeek and Smith 2003: 65).

Undoubtedly, a team's on-field success plays a vital role. However, even when the team fails on the pitch, it does not mean that it loses its fans' interest and support. Highly identified 'die-hard' fans are extremely loyal and support their favourite teams regardless of their on-field performance (Wann and Branscombe 1990). Moreover, athletic success itself may be defined in many ways, based on expectations (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998). As a result, fans may be satisfied with their teams' performance even if it does not lead to a high position in the league rankings. They may perceive their team performing relatively well – compared to the previous season, given the team's low budget, because their team won against the leader in the league table, etc. For teams at the bottom of the table, avoiding relegation would be treated as success; for teams aspiring to become global brands, success is measured by the number of domestic and international trophies attained (Wakefield 2007).

In the case of sports teams with global brand status, athletic success is one of the key factors affecting their strength. Success leads to the creation of team brand equity in the global marketplace (Kerr and Gladden 2008), first, because it has an impact on the perceived quality of the team brand – teams that are successful on the field are perceived as being of higher quality (Bodet and Chanavat 2010; Kerr and Emery 2016). Second, success contributes to brand equity because it leads to greater brand awareness. A successful team that wins a match or a tournament attracts media attention, which makes it possible for information about its victory to reach a considerable group of people, even those not interested in sport: 'Successful [football] teams are unlikely to suffer relegation and so they remain in the highest division and are more likely to be televised worldwide, especially if they also qualify for prestigious competitions such as the Champions League' (Kerr and Emery 2011: 887).

On-field team success plays a particularly vital role in attracting overseas fans who, as was mentioned during the interviews, often first hear about the team, via the media, having just won, and this information may determine their decision to support (Kerr and Emery 2016). Therefore, it is on-field

success that allows the team's popularity to exceed its domestic market. As Kerr and Emery stated: 'The greater the international media exposure, fuelled by success, the greater the potential for a sport team to develop a worldwide fan base' (2011: 887). It is also on-field success that, in the opinion of some researchers, helps a particular team with global aspirations to distinguish itself from other teams in congested foreign markets where competition has been more intense these days than in the past (Bodet and Chanavat 2010; Kerr and Emery 2016).

The importance of success for satellite fans of foreign-based teams was proved by Branscombe and Wann (1991) who revealed that sports success matters more for fans of geographically distant teams than for those supporting local teams. Hamil claimed that success is particularly important for fans outside the core group – among others for international television viewers (2008: 124). As the studies of Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) and Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) showed, for a significant proportion of the surveyed satellite fans of Liverpool FC and Ajax FC, the sports success of their team was the reason why they became its fans. However, satellite fans are not only success-driven; they also appreciate quality of play, 'even if it cannot compensate the absence of recent wins or victories in important competitions' (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 59). Some global teams are aware of how important an asset quality of sports performance is. As an example, Manchester United explicitly acknowledged the vital role of its style of play in its 2004 *Annual Report*: 'Going forward we will continue to invest in our squad and play our sport in the proper spirit and style for which the [team] has become famous' (Hamil 2008: 126). According to Hamil (2008), a key factor that over decades has attracted fans to Manchester United is its attacking playing style.

Paradoxically, while winning team records undoubtedly impact the marketing effectiveness of the team, by nature they are not controllable by marketers. This poses some challenges to those creating sports brands. Most sports teams go through good and bad patches, and it is crucial that their management realise how to make use of their on-field victories and go smoothly through times of failure. Some researchers have even suggested that because marketers are unable to control their core product – on-field results – they should be careful about employing sports teams' achievements in their marketing campaigns (Richelieu and Pons 2006; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011). As even the best teams are not able to predict the sports results they will achieve next season, 'sports marketers are better off promising something besides a winning effort,' suggested Wakefield (2007: 26). While success helps, if there is no success, marketers in promotional campaigns should focus on 'the achievements and performance of individual players, progress from previous years, isolated successes ... or changing the point of reference from winning to some other trait on which the team or organization performs well' (2007: 26). In order to combat periods of bad performance teams should develop other sources of organisational strength: 'marketing management can begin to strategically prepare themselves for combating lean team performance challenges and limitations' (Irwin, Zwick and Sutton 1999: 324).

Some works (Gladden and Milne 1999; Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005) have revealed that, besides on-field team results, brand equity also affects the economic performance of sports teams. 'The brand,

thus, allows economic performance figures to exist somewhat independently of athletic success' (Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005: 497). Athletic success does not guarantee 'super brand' status, but it is a necessary factor that allows a team to achieve it: 'If winning alone does not give you the status of super brand, it seems that winning is a necessity for a brand that aspires to become a super brand. This appears to be especially true of a global brand, since a winning record is the only thing a global [fan] understands, even before the rules of the sport (Waltner, 2000)' (Richelieu and Pons 2006: 238). On-field results are key in building and leveraging a sports team brand, but in order to build brand equity something more than that is needed (Couvolaere and Richelieu 2005; Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008; Richelieu 2013). Therefore, studies that examine the determinants of strong global sports brands generally acknowledge the fact that the team's on-the-field performance matters but do not consider it to be a primary factor (Hill and Vincent 2006).

Regardless of whether team success is recognised as a crucial determinant of global sports team brands or just one of a few important antecedents, interview findings and the available literature have demonstrated that it has a major impact on fans' decision to choose their favourite sports team. Both the interviewed experts and the authors of existing research understood success of a team operating in the global marketplace as the team's winning record achieved in both domestic and international competitions; team success matters particularly to the team's overseas fans and dominates the team's style of play (which is found less appealing). Based on the importance of team success it was therefore hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between team success and global sports team brand favouriteness.

This study proposed a new five-item scale to measure the importance of on-the-field success for fans choosing their favourite sports team brand. The scales existing in past research were not applicable for the purpose of this study. The scales from general marketing research measured the performance of non-sports corporations or employee performance, but because they did not reflect the specific character of on-the-field success they could not be employed in this work. Similarly, the team success scales available in the sports marketing literature were not appropriate to measure the on-the-field success of teams in the global marketplace.

2.2.3. Engagement through marketing

Towards the end of the 1980s professional teams in the UK began to understand that their off-the-field activities could be a valuable source of revenue, in addition to money paid directly to teams by their fans. As a result, many of them created marketing departments (Giulianotti 1999: 88) where those off-the-field activities could be planned and implemented. At the same time, the role of marketing in improving the off-the-field performance of sports teams was examined by researchers considering sports teams to be another type of business. The term 'marketing' is understood broadly and also covers the communication activities of a sports team brand, which need to be applicable to different audiences (including fans). Engaging fans with the sports team brand through the overall

communication and marketing activities of the team is an important task of sports teams' marketing departments.

Such an approach to sports teams' marketing is quite common, which was reflected in the interviews conducted by the researcher. Commercial departments identify potential target markets in which the values that a particular team represents would appeal to local fans, as well as skilfully developing the communication in those territories in order to 'sell the brand' and 'create the fan following' that is a part of the brand-building process. The brand marketing director noted that the approach to marketing and its role has changed in sports teams, which is reflected in the way their marketing departments operate:

If you look at the success of Formula 1 and you look at the success of the NBA ... it stems from having very strong professional marketing and communications departments. And that's why I think sports [are] changing. Ten, twenty years ago ... there were very few professional marketers; everyone had grown up in a sport but [had] fallen into it from a different profession. Now sports have recognised that to grow globally they need to market themselves as brands, as Vodafone do, as Orange do, or as Ford do. So they need to take the skills the marketers have and apply them to their teams, and that's where I think the success comes from.

Many interviewees emphasised that communicating a brand in a way that is applicable to its different stakeholders is crucial to global team brand development, and marketing departments are the main architects of this process. All team brand components are, in the opinion of the researcher at the sports marketing research company, 'based around communication and ... this knowledge of international fans and the knowledge of how different fans are in various markets'. A brand that aspires to be global and plans to enter a foreign market needs to fully understand the specific characters of potential fans in order to communicate itself in the right way and benefit commercially from the expansion.

The interviewed experts suggested that in order for this to happen the key is engagement and creating fans' emotional attachment to their brand. Fans engage with the brand only if the message they receive captivates them. As the associate at the sports consultancy emphasised: 'if you give them a story that they are not interested in, then they are not gonna engage.' To engage fans, however, it matters not only what is said but also how it is said. According to the president of the global communications agency, the story needs to be told in a way that appeals to various audiences – in a particular place (a geographic region) and time (a moment in a history). Although it is still the same brand story it has to be customised – in the way it is told.

To tailor the message to the needs of various groups of international fans is a feature of an innovative team brand capable of understanding its fans and the context they live in, and subsequently responding to it with appropriate marketing activities. The president of the global communications agency added that a good team brand story needs to be told clearly and consistently through various team channels. Especially nowadays, new media development means that marketers can easily create and manage engaging content and disseminate it to a team's fans through online media.

This consistency of the message was emphasised by many interviewees. It should be visible in the marketing programme undertaken in order to create the bridge between fans and the team. The programme needs to be carefully planned and implemented, based on various media channels and other of the team's assets. The starting point is the sports product, but equally important is the way it is sold to fans. The commercial manager of the Formula 1 team described it using the example of the sport discipline he represents:

... you have to have a complete marketing programme in place. So you have to make sure that the product that you're selling – which comes down to the colour, the look of your car, that is consistent across everything you sell – it's nice, fans like it ... You then have [to get] a communications platform in place to support it, so that means full PR plan, online activation, social networking activation, Twitter, Facebook ... and ultimately you've got to have a good driver as well.

However, while there is awareness of the importance of marketing in engaging fans, sports teams often do not succeed in it as they do not undertake appropriate activities. According to the interviewees, even global sports team brands rarely tailor their marketing communications to fans from various territories. A representative of a football team admitted that it is a difficult process for all football teams in the EPL: 'We are all tempted to build a deep and meaningful engagement with our international fans and nobody's really managed to fully capitalise on that connection as far as we've seen today.' That was confirmed by the expert working for another EPL team: 'We don't communicate our brand at all. We don't do anything – internationally. You know ... that's what I'm trying to change here. At the moment this football [team] does literally nothing for its foreign ... for people overseas who are interested in it.'

The existing marketing literature reflects the opinion of the interviewed experts, namely that carefully thought-out marketing activities are key in building and managing strong sports team brands and are vital for engaging their fans. As Richelieu and Pons wrote: 'In sports marketing, sport represents just 50% of the equation; marketing is the other 50%, and in marketing, the cornerstone of any strategy is the [fan]' (2005: 161). Engaged fans have a strong relationship with their team brand, interact with it and feel part of it. Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2014) suggested that sports teams' marketers will successfully create a relationship between fans and the team if fans feel they are appreciated and valued. Engagement leads fans to team brand consumption behaviours. In this aspect engagement is similar to team identification, which 'has been shown to predict a number of behaviours' including game attendance and purchasing of team-licensed merchandise and sponsor's products (Ngan, Prendergast and Tsang 2011: 554).

Hill and Vincent (2006) noted that building a relationship with foreign fans especially poses challenges for sports team brands that want to expand globally, as these fans are less familiar with all those team aspects that local fans experience on a day-to-day basis, such as live game experience and the team's history. The internationalisation strategies of major sports teams usually take a few specific forms.

Their on-the-field successes coupled with the impact of the player factor and the off-the-field marketing activities raise awareness of those brands and leverage their equity in foreign markets. The best examples of teams that have successfully used this strategy are Manchester United and Real Madrid, which 'have benefited from the "first entry" or pioneer advantage' (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 56) in the global marketplace. It was off-the-field management and marketing operations that, according to Hill and Vincent (2006) greatly contributed to Manchester United's achieving global team brand reputation. Liga Futbol (2004) estimated that the team's marketing policies 'were ten years ahead of their time' (cited in Hill and Vincent 2006: 226). Talented and famous players for Real Madrid and Manchester United allowed both teams to attract a significant number of fans. Zinedine Zidane and David Beckham are two ex-players of those teams, who, although their careers have finished, remain examples of the benefits of employing star sports personalities in team marketing operations (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006; Chanavat and Bodet 2009). The recruitment of a group of high-profile athletes such as Zidane, Beckham and Luis Figo – *Galácticos* – was a crucial part of the proto-image of the firm (PIF) management approach that helped Real Madrid to leverage its profile globally and increase its turnover (Kase et al. 2007). Another element of using athletes as part of a team's marketing strategy is signing a player from the same territory that the team wants to target. This strategy was especially successful in the case of Asian players recruited by some EPL teams.

Other international marketing operations cover pre-season tours; participation in international tournaments such as the International Champions Cup (ICC) within the scope of which the best European football teams play friendly games in various continents; or the NBA Global Games played outside the US and Canada between the NBA teams themselves or against international basketball teams; launching and development of football schools and academies aimed at engaging local communities, etc. The pioneer teams to organise international football tours – mainly to the US and Asia – were the EPL teams Manchester United and Liverpool FC. Real Madrid was the first Spanish team to follow that path (Urrutia et al. 2008). Football academies, especially, allow the teams to engage young sports amateurs and grow the next generations of fans. A great example of such an approach is Barcelona FC, which has developed a global network of schools and camps for young football novices (Chadwick and Arthur 2008). The NBA and FIBA's Basketball Without Borders (BWOB) camps, which have been staged in various continents since 2001, are 'to promote the sport and encourage positive social change in the areas of education, health, and wellness' (nba.com 2016). At the same time, 'This grassroots basketball development ... [allows] for the exploration, development, and nurturing of the top youth basketball talent' (Means and Nauright 2008: 374) and helps to engage local communities in the brands of the NBA teams and league. Such operations are used 'to reinforce the emotional connection between the [team] and fans by enabling foreign fans to see their team closely' (Richelieu and Pons 2006: 237). According to Hill and Vincent (2006), the opportunity to experience a team brand in such a way facilitates building the team's relationship with foreign fans much better than when it is done through conventional media (Hill and Vincent 2006: 223). Truly global brands are able to engage not only people in a particular region of the world but also fans on a global basis. The example here is Barcelona's partnership with UNICEF under the theme '*Barça*, more than a club, it is a new global hope for vulnerable children', within the scope of which

UNICEF's logo appears on Barcelona players' shirts (by 2006 Barcelona did not have any sponsor's logo on them) (Chadwick and Arthur 2008; Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008; Richelieu and Desbordes 2009). That agreement increased the team's prestige and demonstrated that it wants to be perceived as an entity aware of global problems and contributing to solving them. It also emphasised Barcelona's uniqueness as – unlike the other big sports team brands – it does not have a commercial shirt sponsor (Chadwick and Arthur 2008). This step reflects the general tendency of 'a push for humanitarianism and social responsibility in all sports particularly when they venture from developer to developing markets' (Means and Nauright 2008: 375).

Strategic partnerships are also a major part of internationalisation strategies as they help to promote sports team brands globally or in a particular region and engage the international fan community. The global aspirations of some teams are reflected in the sponsors they select, which are also global businesses (Kase et al. 2008; Kerr and Gladden 2008). Such a relationship is beneficial for both parties – the team and its commercial partner: 'Being associated with other international brand names lends global auras to brands as they go worldwide' (Hill and Vincent 2006: 223). On the other hand, strategic partnerships with local businesses from those markets where a team brand wants to expand help the team brand to target local fans and stay there on a long-term basis. In exchange, local businesses receive the opportunity to promote themselves. The abovementioned promotional overseas tours that some teams often take up are part of the agreement between a team and its sponsor. According to Jingbo, Zhou and Pritchard (2010), this trend is particularly observable among Chinese businesses with global aspirations. Other types of partnership are alliances with local sports teams (Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008). Within the scope of this relationship global (or aspiring to become global) teams provide local ones with commercial, managerial or coaching support, help in setting up training academies, or commit themselves to organise tours in that region (Jingbo, Zhou and Pritchard 2010). At the same time they receive the opportunity to promote themselves to the local community. Finally, to increase the visibility of their brands, sports teams open foreign outlets in particular regions or establish partnerships with local businesses to distribute their branded products. Apart from reducing distribution costs, this allows foreign teams to capitalise on the reputations of their local partners (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005).

In order to engage international fans through their marketing activities, international sports teams also use the opportunities created by media technology. Websites in local languages tailored to the needs of overseas fans in different countries offer exclusive content as well as archive material. They give fans worldwide the option to follow their team on a day-to-day basis and subsequently 'help nurture the passion of fans and build the team's brand' (Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008: 38). The team's websites and social media channels, managed by a team, are in the case of satellite fans in particular a key tool in communicating with their team and other fans, which additionally facilitates building a virtual team brand community beyond the team's domestic market (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005). New technology enables fans to keep in touch with their team whenever and wherever they are (Hamil 2008).

Unfortunately, existing research has not given much attention to how foreign sports fans receive the abovementioned global sports teams' marketing activities and to what extent these activities affect their decision to support a particular team. The attempt made by Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) demonstrated that some satellite fans do pay attention to the business side of international football teams' operations and evaluate these teams based on their marketing performance, at the same time as recognising it as a success factor (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 63). French and Chinese fans of the Big Four EPL teams especially positively assessed the international marketing operations of Manchester United in Asia (many of the surveyed fans identified mainly with the team's promotional tours undertaken in this territory). Also particularly well received by French fans were the off-the-field activities of Arsenal FC, among which the team's naming rights contract with Emirates Airlines was considered to be an important and good decision for the team's future (Chanavat and Bodet 2009). The abovementioned studies demonstrated that friendly or charity games undertaken within the scope of international tours or other teams' CSR activities seem to particularly appeal to fans. This may imply that, as presented earlier, global teams' marketing activities leading to fan engagement are often successful. Therefore, based on the literature and the conducted interviews, the engagement through marketing variable was included in the model and the following hypothesis was posed:

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between engagement through marketing and global sports team brand favouriteness.

Unfortunately, works that show the impact of marketing activities on sports team brand development do not provide appropriate scales to measure this variable. Therefore, a new eight-item scale was proposed: Questions 2–5 measured a fan's evaluation of the team's marketing-mix dimensions; Questions 6–8 examined the relationship between a team's marketing efforts and fan engagement; and Question 1 was added to measure the quality of communication between a team brand and its fans.

2.2.4. Media exposure

Some of the interviewed experts suggested that in order for a sports team brand to become global it must have global/international media exposure, meaning that it must reach global audiences. It is because global fan bases learn about teams' successes from the media. This ties in with the definition of a global sports team brand; using the words of the commercial director of the football team, a global sports team brand needs to be 'recognised around the globe'.

According to him, global media exposure is the most crucial factor allowing a sports team brand to reach global status: 'to be a global sports brand you have to have global exposure ... That's the key, that's the first thing. ... If you wanna be global how else [are] people around, how else [are] people in India, in Singapore and Africa gonna hear about you?' In particular he emphasised the significant role of television exposure: 'brands exist and they have prominence because they are on TV all the time.' If

there is no exposure, whatever efforts made by the team (including its on-field success) or attempts to build brand strength will be futile, because, as the commercial director of the football team argued, 'If they [the fans] don't know that you won anything, it's irrelevant that you won'. He gave the example of the Premier League football teams, which are considered to be global brands mainly owing to the fact of being recognised globally:

... without doing anything we've become global sports brands because we're on television, we are on television all the time. We've carried out our normal course of business, which is the same as we've done over 130 years ... more or less ... playing football games. Just happens that there's some television deals that happened in the background we've got nothing to do with really, and that now we've got more people who watch us outside the UK than inside England. ... And Premier League football [teams] have proven that you can become a global sports brand without doing anything else, 'cause most of us do nothing else outside our territories.

Hence, EPL teams' popularity is often not down to their international on-field performance, as only a few of them have been truly successful, but to the fact that many people around the world watch their games on TV. The director of the sports marketing consultancy 1 also referred to the EPL teams to illustrate how the media contributes to global team brand status:

... if you go back to look at successful teams in the 1970s and 80s, Liverpool was the pre-eminent site. So a good question would be why isn't Liverpool a bigger global brand than Manchester United? And the answer to that is: Manchester had its period of success at a time when the English Premier League was being broadcast in 111 countries around the world to 4.5 billion people, whereas at the time Liverpool was successful, it was seen on a Saturday night in England.

Although on-field successes of both teams – Liverpool FC and Manchester United – were comparable, they both possess fans all over the world, and Liverpool FC is perceived as a global brand, 'it's not as large and successful a global brand as MU ... and the reason is that at the time it had its success it did not get the international exposure like Manchester United has had,' concluded the director of the sports marketing consultancy 1.

Therefore, in the opinion of the majority of the interviewed experts, nowadays having a global media platform is fundamental for a sports team to become a global brand. 'How else can you do it? Through word of mouth on the Internet. How many global sports brands are there that don't have a media platform? None. I don't think. So I think – media exposure is fundamental to this,' the commercial director of the football team claimed. A media platform consisting of television and online channels is a must-have for each global sports team brand. It builds up the team's media presence and allows fans throughout the world to be familiar with the team and its brand. As some interviewees agreed, online media are a key part of this platform. One of the main reasons is that they help to build relationships with fans around the globe and allow them to feel that they are owners of their favourite team brand. The associate at the sports consultancy explained this process and uniqueness of online media in the following way: 'How do you develop ownership? So that's about creating a dialogue with the fans. So it's about using media and using your assets. It needs to be two-way. So the fans need to feel that they talk to the [team] and to the players and vice versa.' This indicates that not only traditional media guarantee exposure. In the light of the increasing significance of online communication, it is crucial

that a team's brand management in particular takes care of the media channels it directly controls. Hence, media exposure comes down to the presence of the sports team brand on media – traditional and online – in particular created by the team's brand management (resulting from the team's brand management activities).

The role of the media in creating global brands has been acknowledged in the marketing literature. Works examining the globalisation phenomenon from various perspectives – e.g. sociological or cultural, economic or marketing – have pointed to the media as one of the drivers of globalisation, including the globalisation of sports. As Rein, Kotler and Shields wrote: 'The "media crush" is the greatest blessing the sport has ever received' (2006: 70).

Mass media, both traditional (press, radio, television) and, more recently, online forms, have allowed the same message to be spread worldwide, so that sports fans in different regions of the globe through various communication channels all have access to the same information about match results, player transfers, records broken, etc. A particularly powerful medium is television, which 'has historically been the mass channel for a sports encounter' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 70) and while the impact of new online media is extremely important and is still growing, the role of television remains enormous inasmuch as the absence of a particular sport discipline on television may mean that 'the sport may well fail or lack the ability to connect to fans' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 70). Whereas television first of all facilitates access to transmission of team competitions on a mass scale, online media make the information about teams easily accessible (Kerr and Emery 2016) and provide more personalised team brand experience than television (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006). They also facilitate interaction between fans and the teams they support, and between fans themselves.

Traditional electronic media, and television in particular, have helped many teams to reach the status of global brands. A good example of how media may affect the international popularity of sports teams is a television programme *Tippekampen* broadcast on Norwegian television and providing live coverage of English Premier League games. Regular broadcasts on Saturday afternoons became for Norwegian football fans almost a ritual and led to the development of support for English football teams in Norway (Hognestad 2006). As Kerr and Emery noted, *Tippekampen* in Norway and *Tipsextra* – its Swedish equivalent – 'became a cultural institution for many football fans ... and cultivated a new generation of fans' (2016: 517). In some of the world's regions the strongest and most famous sports team brands often receive more favourable television rights packages from television networks as they offer better returns on investment to television companies (Charumbira 2016: 15) and this allows them to reach international fans in those particular markets more easily.

According to Richelieu and Desbordes (2009), an efficient system of communication, consisting of the teams' website, television and publications, is a key internal determinant of the internationalisation of sports team brands. This can be illustrated by the example of Manchester United which, as Hill and Vincent (2006) claimed, would not have become a global brand without using new media technologies. Although other football teams in the Premier League have received the same promotion opportunities through the media, 'it was Manchester United that seized the moment to capitalise on its

reputation and establish itself as a global brand and sports icon' (2006: 218). In addition to Manchester United's games being broadcast on BSkyB, they were also showed on the team's own dedicated television network MUTV and online through MU.tv available on subscription (Hill and Vincent 2006). After all, many of the major sports teams (e.g. European football teams Manchester United, Barcelona FC or Juventus), driven by an intention to boost their brand value, developed their own branded television channels (Zagnoli and Radicchi 2016), which have become official means of communication between teams and their fans – both local and international – and have greatly facilitated their expansion into new international markets.

Thanks to online media, sports teams have received inexpensive means of communication with their dispersed fan communities. Moreover, having established their own communication channels, sports teams have gained control over information they produce themselves. Although international media exposure to some extent depends on arrangements on the league level, owing to the online media growth the opportunity for sports teams to manage media content has increased. Now sports teams can use their own online channels to allow fans not only to access the game coverage but also to download exclusive videos from the players' dressing room, where no one else except the team representatives can go, or ask questions through social media profiles. Teams' websites are edited in different languages in order to target various groups of fans, and social media are constantly bringing teams closer to their foreign-based fans – 'globally and instantly' (Richelieu and Pons 2006: 237). In addition, unofficial team websites coordinated by fans and existing independently from teams are another platform that can serve teams by fostering their fans' allegiances, especially if the teams encourage their development. A good example is Liverpool FC's cooperation in this area with its foreign official supporter branches (more than 200) whose members receive exclusive online content from the team (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011: 30).

Research conducted in the fan environment confirmed that media indeed play an important role in building a global fan community of sports teams with international expansion plans. This group of fans is more media-dependent than a team's local fans (Hognestad 2006). Hence, the presence of a sports team on media contributes to quite an extent to the growth in its overseas support, as, for fans in general but foreign-based fans in particular, media 'have become the most accessible entryway through which fans connect to sports' (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006: 69). Media contribute to building team brand awareness in various geographical regions throughout the world (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). In extreme cases fans' awareness of foreign-based teams can be higher than that of their local teams (Charumbira 2016). Additionally, for overseas fans media act as a socialisation agent (Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Mahony et al. 2002; Kerr 2009a; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016), contributing to the development of their identification with the team. The process of socialisation when fans adapt 'the attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviours that are associated with fans of a team' (Kolbe and James 2000: 25) in the case of local fans is facilitated by geographic proximity, which in regard to overseas fans is replaced by all-embracing media thanks to which they feel that their team is close to them. Media comprehended in such a way 'help nurture the passion of fans and build the

team's brand' (Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008: 38). Internet and satellite television play a particularly important role here (Kerr and Emery 2011). Santomier and Costabiei (2010) attributed the growth of the global fan base of football team brands to the increasing penetration of the Internet. For instance, in March 2007 60 per cent of unique visitors to the Manchester United website were residents from outside the United Kingdom (Santomier and Costabiei 2010: 39). It does not come as a surprise then that media exposure is the primary factor affecting fans' decision to support foreign-based teams (Hognestad 2006; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). Having taken into consideration the impact that the presence of a global sports team in media has on its worldwide position as a brand and global fanship, the following hypothesis was posed:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between media exposure and global sports team brand favouriteness.

A number of media exposure scales available in the marketing literature did not address the issues raised in this study. They rather focused on the media consumption patterns, not the degree to which the brand is present in television and on the Internet, as Questions 1 to 3 created by the researcher do. The fourth item in the scale was added to examine to what extent television exposure leads fans to favour a particular team brand.

2.2.5. Brand identity

The interviewed brand practitioners described team brand identity in terms of unique team brand values and brand essence. This is about what a brand stands for and why it is different from its competitors. It is crucial that the brand identity and values are unique so that the brand can be easily differentiated from its competitors by its fans and potential sponsors. Brand identity is the starting point in the brand-building process. As an interviewee advised: 'define your values and your essence ... and then ... create a holistic brand world around that.'

The conducted interviews demonstrated that sports teams use various methods to build an identity that makes them stand out from their competitors and appear special. Those teams that are lucky enough to achieve satisfying on-the-field results make their athletic success one of their brand values. According to the commercial director of the football team this is the case for Manchester United: 'I think, for Manchester United, constantly winning has influenced its brand values.' However, it is not only on-the-field victories that count; the style of play is important, too, and may form part of the team's brand identity and unique values. All teams want to achieve great on-the-field results in great style. There are some that, even if they do not win, try to demonstrate that their brand stands for an exciting style of play. Such attractive performances guarantee stable game attendance and viewership numbers. This was confirmed by the commercial director of the football team: '[Our team] is very popular for playing attractive football; we're known for playing entertaining, stylish, attractive football – not winning all the time, but always entertaining. And that is a wonderful set of values to have for a global sports brand.' He emphasised that his team's identity, reflected in their style of play, has been cultivated by the team management over generations: 'So when you see the great players we've got

out here playing on Saturday ... there is a hundred years of the same type of player who played here. That's what this [team] has got at its core and that's why it's different.'

Some teams, if they can, employ their brand history and heritage in their identity, including their stadium, which the publishing company owner considers, in the case of football teams, 'a symbol of that heritage almost'. In rugby for instance a similarly vital part of heritage would be a team name or a shirt. Some of the interviewees claimed, however, that while heritage may be an important component of team brand identity, it should not be the only one. While it can be useful in building a global brand strategy, it cannot be the basis of it. 'I think heritage is useful, but it's not a massive driver,' said the commercial manager of the Formula 1 team. 'It's important you sort of nod your head to history and you are aware of it, but you can't run on history the entire time,' especially if the team can rely on other elements in its brand building.

Interestingly, many interviewees linked team brand identity issues with team brand story. In the opinion of some of them a strong story is part of a team's identity: '[Our team] uniqueness is around the strength of the story,' said the head of CRM at the football team, which means that 'Identity is often shaped through a story,' as the associate at the sports consultancy clarified. In his opinion a story is essential to a brand as it shows where the brand has come from – it goes back to its history but should not be limited to it. Equally important is that a story demonstrates that the brand is innovative and able to evolve if necessary and adapt to changes in society, i.e. people's behaviours, interests, demographic trends. Finally, people need to feel that the brand story is relevant to them and better than those of its competitors.

If the team brand story is unique then it allows the brand values to stand out from the crowd of competitors whose values are often, in the opinion of the head of CRM at the football team, 'pretty generic' and to appeal to various brand audiences, including global ones. In his view the uniqueness of his team's brand story is captivating to any fan throughout the world:

So every time if we look at [our team] we have a great story to tell, we have the story to tell that contains amazing highs, we have real success. But we also have a story that contains real tragedy, in terms of things that happened here as well, and then we have some of the actual on-field games that the team have played when they have been losing the League in the last minute of the match, and then winning the Champions League, the ultimate trophy for a [team] in football when it was seen as being impossible halfway through that match. So as a [team] we have a fascinating story to tell that I think appeals to people at the global level.

However, as the commercial director of the football team claimed, sports teams must be clear about what their brands stand for, and their 'behaviour' and visual identity must be consistent with those values and essence. According to the brand marketing director, players should also be actively involved in putting brand values into both their play and their lives, really 'exhibiting' these brand attributes and values. He gave the example of basketball players who, after joining a basketball team, participate in the induction course where they are 'taught about the values ... about teamwork, about respect, about aspiration for excellence' which later are to be reflected in their behaviour.

The team's coherent visual identity may allow the team to better express its brand essence and help fans to understand it – if only it remains consistent with it, as emphasised by the commercial director of the football team:

... you've got to have the philosophy underpinning what you're doing, why you behave how you behave and what you stand for, but you have to be able to communicate it consistently and coherently both visually but in other forms of communication as well. ... the visual world is the world the most obvious to people, 'cause that's what they see and it's much easier to see that brand is coherent and consistent rather than understand that all the behaviours are coherent and consistent.

Visual identity generally includes design of publications, packaging, website, retailing environments and hospitality environments. However, in the case of sports such as Formula 1 it goes even further and, as the commercial manager of the Formula 1 team said, it covers 'the car, [the] drivers' suits, [the] team clothing, how the garage looks, what colour the team transport is, what colour the team base is, what's everybody wearing in the team factory.'

The general literature on brand identity is extensive and sports team brand identity has also been of interest to marketing researchers. Kapferer already suggested as early as 1992 that the world has entered into the brand identity era. He claimed that 'to become a power brand and to remain so, a brand has a duty to be faithful to its identity' (1992: 37). Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000: 40) called identity 'one of the four pillars ... of creating strong brands'. For Aaker it was the 'essence of the brand' (1996: 68). De Chernatony argued that identity decides brand uniqueness and strength and is linked to 'the ethos, aims and values that present a sense of individuality differentiating the brand' (1999: 157). Keller (2013) in his brand equity pyramid pointed to brand identity as the first step in creating strong brand equity. At that stage a brand must be differentiated from its competitors and commonly recognisable.

Much the same line has been followed by studies on sports branding, which have also emphasised that defining the identity of a sports team is the first step in developing the brand equity of the team (Richelieu 2004; Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005; Richelieu and Pons 2006; Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008). Hence, strong coherent team identity leads to strong brands. A well-defined identity of a sports team is key, when the team lacks on-field successes: 'Even though the level of success on the field of a professional team may have an impact on brand development, ultimately strong brand equity should overcome losing records through the establishment of a strong identity' (Richelieu and Pons 2006: 231–232). Even during less successful times, the team brand identity should manifest itself in a team's sports performance – which means that the team's style of play should be consistent with their team brand identity (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005). Otherwise, 'If the actual product on the field is not coherent with what the team used to stand for and poor performance extends in time, fans can start distancing themselves from the team and the brand' (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005: 43). Team brand identity comprising brand attributes and values gives the brand meaning and direction (Hill and Vincent 2006; Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008; Richelieu 2013), and there should be coherence between these values and the perceptions of fans (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005). Some

teams try to change their visual identity through new colours and a new logo, which, as Gladden and Milne (1999) argued, has an impact on brand equity in the professional sports team setting.

The unique identity of sports teams is highly beneficial for their brands (Richelieu and Pons 2006: 232). The team brand uses its values to position itself on the market and distinguish itself from its competitors (Richelieu 2013: 406–407). Therefore, team brand identity takes on a particular meaning in the global marketplace. Some of the most profitable international markets have become crowded nowadays, and, in the face of fierce competition, the issue of how to stand out from other team brands is crucial. Chanavat and Bodet (2009) claimed that, in the case of some teams planning to expand globally, on-field success and operational marketing may turn out not to be sufficient, and clear coherent brand identity would be a better solution. Some global sports team brands are more successful than others in defining their essence and values as well as why they are different from their competitors, which greatly contributes to their strong position worldwide. It is often owing to the fact that they manage to communicate their identity in a consistent way. For instance, the values of honesty, discipline, fighting spirit, leadership, camaraderie, chivalry and nobility associated with Real Madrid and described as ‘Madridismo’ have been emphasised in the team brand’s strategy (Kase et al. 2007). The same applies to tradition, which in the case of the team from Madrid is best embodied by two individuals whose names are known to many sports fans throughout the world: a legendary player Alfredo di Stefano and a president of the team Santiago Bernabéu ‘who is taken as an inspiration and stimulation for leadership, proper behaviour, discipline, and the will to win’ (Kase et al. 2007: 216). Real Madrid’s players, who are considered an important part of the team’s strategy, must fit those values in their on- and off-field behaviour. What is more, the team’s sponsors need to share some of the abovementioned values: ‘In selecting sponsors, Real Madrid is careful to ensure that they share values such as tradition, leadership, high standards of performance and a good reputation for corporate social responsibility’ (Kase et al. 2007: 224).

Existing research conducted among international fans of global teams showed that they understand and appreciate their teams’ identity and values. When talking about Manchester United in their study of the Big Four teams (2009), Chanavat and Bodet showed that Manchester United’s overseas fans are aware of and value its history and heritage, of which an important part is the squad of players described as ‘a cocktail of local talents and world stars’ (2009: 473). The team from Old Trafford has coherently built its identity and succeeded in taking ‘its storied history into world markets to take full advantage of globalisation’ (Hill and Vincent 2006: 213). However, Manchester United’s identity is not limited to its heritage. While the aircraft disaster in which half of the Manchester United team passed away brought the team to the attention of the global public, the team would not have remained a global brand over the years if its brand heritage was not accompanied by other components such as athletic success. As one of the abovementioned interviewees argued, Manchester United is one of those global team brands that for its fans is associated with undeniable on-field successes, which have become part of its identity. Another EPL team, Liverpool FC, is recognised for ‘its strong attachment to working-class values and its special relationship between the [team] and the fans’ (Chanavat and Bodet 2009: 475). This is symbolised by the fans’ anthem *You’ll Never Walk Alone*.

Although it is not as successful on the field as it used to be in the past, the team's satellite fans still have an admiration for its history of success and style of play, commonly described as exciting (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). The team's values of reputation and tradition (covering style of play, history of success and ethical behaviour) were the most important factor behind the original decision to support for more than 96 per cent of Ajax FC's foreign-based fans (mainly Americans). Finally, Hognestad's (2006) research demonstrated that Scandinavian fans of English football teams value the visual identity of some of their favourite teams – for them the design and colours of the team strip were the main reason why they started to support those teams. Particularly attracted by teams' identity and values may be those fans who perceive a fit between the values of the team and their own, or those who draw from their team brand identity and 'borrow symbolic dimensions of the brand to define their own identity' (Schembri, Merrilees and Kristiansen 2010 cited in Richelieu 2013: 407). French football fans examined by Chanavat and Bodet (2009) seemed to favour Liverpool FC over other teams as they had a perception of a fit between the team from Anfield's values and the values they used to define themselves – using the words of Chanavat and Bodet, they 'perceived it [Liverpool FC] to have a strong social-background fit with them' (2009: 476).

Although the literature examining the theory of brand identity is extensive, there were no scales available that would directly address the issues identified in this study. Research outside sports marketing has focused on the employee perspective of corporate identity. Existing general marketing studies have examined the role of identity attractiveness in identification with companies and the researcher was not convinced that the scales used in those studies were suitable for examining the identity of sports team brands. On the other hand, the identity scales available in the sports marketing and management literature were not appropriate to directly measure the importance of a sports team brand's unique identity for its fan base. Therefore, the researcher proposed a new four-item scale drawing on the definition adapted from the abovementioned de Chernatony's (1999) brand identity definition. In this study team brand identity was conceptualised as an intangible sports team asset deciding the team's brand uniqueness and strength, linked to the team's brand ethos, aims and values, all of which present a sense of individuality differentiating the brand. The importance put on the team brand identity in the interviews with experts and past research allowed the following hypothesis to be posed:

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between brand identity and global sports team brand favouriteness.

2.3. Global sports team brand favouriteness outcomes

2.3.1. Product purchase

This variable was included in the model on the basis of the literature review and conducted interviews. Products purchased are any products related to a fan's favourite global sports team such as the team's merchandise, memorabilia and digital products. Products purchase is a significant revenue stream and hence a measurable direct benefit that fans bring to the team. For instance, in the 2015–

16 season Manchester United's retail, merchandising, apparel and product licensing revenue was estimated at £97.3 million. This means a significant increase compared to £31.6 million earned by the team during the previous season, 2014–15 (Manchester United website 2016). Among the football teams selling the most shirts, which are the most frequently purchased element of football team merchandising (Szymanski 2015), the best in the Euroamericas study of the 2015–16 season was Barcelona FC, which sold 3,637,000 shirts (Whaling 2016). According to PWC, most merchandising (covering 'licensed products with team or league logos, player likenesses, or other intellectual property' (2011: 2)) is sold in North America, and American sports leagues surpass European football leagues in this respect (Szymanski 2015). In 2010 North America accounted for 71 per cent of the global sports merchandising market (PWC 2011). PWC forecasts claimed that merchandising is a substantial, though still the smallest, category of global sports industry revenue and was estimated to reach US\$20.1 billion in 2015.

Merchandise was the element most frequently discussed by the interviewed experts. The researcher learnt from the interviews that the contribution of teams' merchandise sale revenue to overall teams' budgets varies depending on the sports discipline. Among the three global team sports that were discussed during the interviews (football, basketball and Formula 1), the percentage of revenue from merchandise sales in Formula 1 teams' budgets is relatively small compared to the budgets of football and basketball teams. For Formula 1 teams this is a really small proportion of their revenue – only a few per cent of their budgets. According to the commercial manager of the Formula 1 team, it is rather a service for sponsors than a revenue stream for the teams. Nevertheless, the majority of other interviewees working with football and basketball teams listed merchandise revenue as one of the essential sources of teams' income.

The biggest sports teams try to make their merchandise available abroad, directly to their fans – not only through their websites – which shows that foreign-based fans are an important target for these products. The opportunity to reach worldwide groups of fans has an impact on the selection of a strong partner who will operate merchandise stores around the world and ensure the products' international availability, as was expressed by the commercial director of the football team:

... if you really care about [our team], you should [be able to] buy [our team] shirt anywhere in the world. Today you can't, almost impossible. You can buy them only on our website. We have no retail distribution of our shirts through [our current supplier]. ... So we're changing, we changed our technical kit supplier ... They're setting retail distribution around the world.

Partnerships with global manufacturers and retailers have another advantage for sports teams. As the director of the sports marketing consultancy 2 claimed, the teams also use the strength of their distributors' brands to develop the strength of their own brands. Teams in general grow their own network of distribution points abroad to a lesser extent, as for many of them this would be unprofitable: 'merchandising the [teams] leave in the hands of the experts,' said the PR consultancy director. 'So basically you're just bringing [in] the experts and then you sign with them. You've got people in the [team] who liaise with them but basically you have to trust them.'

Only one interviewee, the owner of a publishing company, claimed that for football teams, while merchandise sales bring significant revenues in their home country, they are relatively small internationally. In his opinion the reason behind this is 'a culture of counterfeiting' accepted in some parts of the world. If it was not because of this, teams' income generated from branded product sales could be higher. That expert stated that a problem of counterfeiting firstly concerns team shirts, which are the most popular merchandise: 'Most fans only want a shirt, so if you can buy a shirt in those countries for 5 per cent of the value they [teams] were selling them at, then you're gonna do that.'

Digital product sales are appreciated equally by football, basketball and F1 teams. However, the interviewees did not try – even roughly – to estimate the proportion of budgets coming from fans acquiring digital products, as this is a relatively new source of revenue. In the opinion of the interviewees such products are especially valuable for teams that aspire to become global as they allow them to reach international fans who may never be able to watch their favourite team live. Digital products are a great opportunity for teams to capitalise on their support, as emphasised by the head of CRM at the football team. These fans, as he said, may be 'looking to have ... a more meaningful relationship with the [team] than somebody locally that can consume it in a very quick and convenient way', and therefore they will be spending more money on those products than local fans. With their digital strategies teams can now monetise millions of international fans by selling them e.g. DVDs, games, mobile phone downloads, ringtones or computer wallpapers. The PR consultancy director indicated that some teams create mobile sites where users can download mobile phone content.

In the acquisition of team branded products by fans the interviewees saw two main benefits for teams – the commercial benefit, being nothing else than a direct revenue stream from fans to the team, and that gained by way of strengthening the team's connection with its fans, who by buying its products further associate themselves with its brand. International fan bases provide much greater profits to global teams than local fans. Therefore, teams that want to strengthen their connection with overseas fans and increase commercial benefits by capitalising on it need to think carefully about their current product offering and invest in 'a much wider product diversification ... being able to not just monetise the expected products and services of the sports brand but to migrate into new markets because of that emotional connection,' said the head of CRM at the football team. Some of the interviewed experts added that it is necessary not only to develop product offering but also to adjust existing products to the needs of overseas fans, e.g. payment methods, price ('£50 for a kit may be too expensive for some markets'), sizes or types of product ('some sell better in certain countries than in others').

Product purchase has received much attention in the subject literature; nevertheless most research focused on merchandise rather than digital product purchases. Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) defined merchandise as apparel and other items containing the logo or name of a sports organisation. Although in this group of products the most popular are team shirts, scarves and hats (Sznajder 2015), the merchandise offer is varied and still growing. Sports memorabilia were described by Rein, Kotler and Shields as 'an eclectic collection of goods, including almost anything that represents a piece of

sports trivia or a historical moment' (2006: 84). Memorabilia, also called 'collectibles', cover autographed sports equipment often linked to special moments in the history of a particular team, posters, retro apparel, trading cards, etc. (Hunt 2006; Schroth, Helfer and Scott 2011; Mullin, Hardy and Sutton 2014). Finally, digital or electronic products are a response of sports teams to advances in new technology (Mullin, Hardy and Sutton 2014) and are not limited to DVDs, video games or mobile downloads. This category is under constant development and new products are continually being added to it. As brand extensions, a team's products are successful if their quality is high, they are legitimate and they do not overstretch the brand far beyond the area of its expertise, so that fans can still see a fit between the products and the team brand (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou and Loukas 2004; Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005).

From the teams' perspective, product sales can first of all create new revenue streams for the teams, especially for those that have developed strong brands. Existing research has proved that established teams sell more branded products (with a focus on merchandise) than those for whom brand equity is not yet developed (Gladden and Milne 1999; Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005; Ross 2006; Wakefield 2007). Wakefield (2007) claimed that usually leaders in merchandise sales possess high brand equity; these are also the same teams that have developed a large fan base. Those teams generate more money through branded product sales not only because they sell more but also because they are capable of enhancing their value beyond their functional growth: 'Individuals are willing to pay more for clothing with those brand marks than for similar clothing with a less visible or less prestigious brand name' (Wakefield 2007: 206). In addition to the revenue-generating function, purchased products enhance fans' relationship with sports teams (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou and Loukas 2004; Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005; Wakefield 2007; Kerr and Emery 2016). Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes wrote, based on studies by Holt (1995, 2002) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), that 'the emotional connection between fans and the team feeds the sale of merchandising products' (2008: 31). This also applies to other team-related items the product purchase variable in this work covers. This is concurrent with the opinion of Kim and Trail (2011) who claimed that fans who perceive a high-quality relationship with a sports organisation are more likely to acquire products that use the same brand name as the sports organisation.

Team-related products reinforce the visibility of the brand when displayed by fans. In this way merchandise purchased by international fans may contribute to extending teams' fan bases abroad. Foreign fans wearing their favourite global team's logo or colours indirectly promote its brand among people they have contact with and in this way enhance brand awareness (Wakefield 2007; Kerr and Gladden 2008). Therefore, global sports teams try to reach their overseas fans offering them the easiest ways to purchase their products. So first of all fans can buy them online. Owing to the fact that merchandise poses problems sometimes when transacted online (Bridgewater 2007) on certain markets that teams especially target, their products are distributed in department or mega stores of the teams' partners – local or global – who already have their distribution channels in those territories. Strategic partnerships with global distributors allow a team brand to reach fans in particular regions of

the world and strengthen its position internationally: 'Outsourcing the merchandising of the team by using complementary partners is a strategy which aims at reinforcing the visibility and the presence of the brand, while capitalizing on the reputation and distribution channels of partners at a low cost' (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005: 40). Some teams open retail stores themselves and prefer not to franchise them '[to] protect the integrity of the brand' (Kase et al. 2007: 225) which is strengthened by the store appearance and equipment, e.g. use of TV monitors showing matches or team memorabilia. Manchester United's project of establishing a network of 'Theatre of Dreams' leisure complexes was set up with the aim of transferring the experience of the Old Trafford stadium to other countries in Asia. In these centres built in several cities, e.g. Hong Kong, Dubai and Singapore, Manchester United fans have the opportunity not only to buy merchandise but also to visit the team's museum or participate in interactive games (Rosaaen and Amis 2004; Hill and Vincent 2006). Finally, international exhibition tours undertaken by top teams are another strategy aimed at increasing sales of their products in particular territories (Evens, Iosifidis and Smith 2013).

From the point of view of fans, team-related products play an important role. Their purchase is one of the most popular consumption behaviours of fans of sports teams, in particular those highly identified with the team (Sutton et al. 1997; Wakefield 2007). Products, especially those that allow fans to display a logo of their favourite team, have a symbolic nature. Product purchase behaviour results from the fans' willingness to acquire 'a tangible representation of the relationship or connection with the brand' (Donavan, Janda and Suh 2006: 128). Cialdini et al. (1976) noted that fans increase their use of symbols (i.e. hats, shirts) with the brand insignia after a victory. However, a study by Gladden and Milne (1999) proved that this is not always the case. They showed that brand equity influences merchandise sales to a greater extent than on-the-field successes in the NHL and the MLB, though not in the NBA; therefore the NHL and the MLB teams should invest in the development of merchandising stores. The NBA teams need to capitalise on short-term sports successes and immediately get ready to sell more merchandise. Digital products – a considerably new group of team-related products – make the team brand easily accessible and allow fans to connect and enhance their involvement with it in the digital environment (Mullin, Hardy and Sutton 2014; Kerr and Emery 2016).

Favourite teams' product purchase is a consumption behaviour often observable among overseas fans of strong global sports teams (Kerr and Gladden 2008; Menefee and Casper 2011). It does not come as a surprise as it is a way of expressing support for a sports team, especially for those of its fans who cannot do it by, for instance, attending a match at the stadium. Menefee and Casper (2011) in their study of basketball fans in China revealed that Chinese fans' behavioural involvement expressed among other ways in merchandise consumption is stronger towards NBA teams than CBA teams. These fans spend more on NBA merchandise annually than on CBA (i.e. domestic basketball league) products. The works of Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) and Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) showed that the vast majority of the surveyed satellite fans of two football teams – Liverpool FC and Ajax FC – purchased their favourite teams' merchandise: 93.7 per cent of the surveyed members of foreign

Liverpool FC fan clubs and 78.6 per cent of international (mostly American) fans of Ajax FC do it at least once a season. This implies that they want to be up to date with the latest products released by their favourite teams that 'regularly re-design their playing jerseys to maximize commercial revenue' (Kerr and Emery 2016: 521). Global sports teams are followed by millions of fans throughout the world whom they attempt to monetise: 'Professional [teams] and franchise brands actively and increasingly target foreign fans ... and they fully exploit the benefits of merchandising and licensing' (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013: 23). PWC reported that the latest trend in sports teams' merchandise sales is an increasing migration of merchandise transactions towards the Internet, which serves growing revenue just from their foreign fans (2011: 27):

A specific benefit of merchandising is the ability to engage with fans who cannot attend matches, including those who live in other countries – an opportunity that has been expanded by the Internet. This engagement helps both to monetise sports brands in those regions and markets [sic].

Taking into consideration that fans purchasing team-related products is a way of expressing their support for their favourite team through which they bring direct benefits to the team brand, the following hypothesis was posed:

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between global sports team brand favouriteness and product purchase.

The scale measuring fans' purchasing behaviour for the products of their favourite teams was partially adapted from existing research and partially developed by the researcher. Question 1 and Question 4 were adapted from the merchandise consumption and merchandise consumption intentions scales (Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002b). The remaining questions were created by the researcher in order to measure past purchase behaviours in regard to various types of team product and the intention to purchase.

2.3.2. Media consumption

This variable concerns the way fans follow information about their favourite team. Information about teams is consumed by fans through print (newspapers, magazines), electronic (TV and radio) and online media (team's websites, online information portals, social media). As Gladden and Funk wrote: '... team sport product [the actual game] can be consumed by people ... through the various forms of media available today (television, radio, and the Internet) and after it is staged as people read newspaper accounts and watch highlights of their favourite team's games' (2002: 56). The more fans identify with their favourite team, the more time they spend following them through various media (Sutton et al. 1997; Wakefield 2007). By consuming electronic and online media content, fans generate revenue for their favourite team brands. The benefits of media consumption for sports teams were widely discussed during the interviews and in past research. Therefore, this variable was included in the model.

Most of the interviewees perceived media consumption as the best way to capitalise especially on foreign-based fans of strong global teams. The experts emphasised that having a global team brand that attracts fans throughout the world who are eager to follow information about their favourite team via media translates to commercial benefits for the brand. As the commercial director of the football team noted, if fans were not interested in their favourite team, media would not be interested in it either because they respond to audience demand: '... the fact that the newspapers are interested is because the fans are interested. If fans didn't care, papers wouldn't come,' he said. This is in line with the opinion of the brand marketing director: 'without fans you have no TV audience,' and subsequently any sports teams' commercial benefits are out of the question. These profits are generated in the form of television deals and through teams' own media platforms, which offer paid-for information content to their fans.

Television revenues were mentioned by almost all interviewees as one of the basic sources of income for teams (i.e. basketball, football and F1). They are the biggest driver of the business for all sports, closely depending on the size of television audience (i.e. fans) in a particular territory: 'So having a fan base in China means that you can drive huge TV deals. If you have a huge fan base in Europe you can sell your rights to Canal+ in Poland, etc.,' explained the brand marketing director. In the case of Formula 1, the NBA or the Premier League, the value of television rights contracts is negotiated centrally by the league management and then revenues are shared collectively among the teams. As some of the interviewed experts admitted, achieving such a significant income does not require much effort from the teams' management; in the words of the publishing company owner, it is 'easy money'. However, part of the television broadcast agreements does remain the responsibility of the teams. For instance, in NBA basketball, '[the] league will sell the rights of the League to countries such as Spain, France, Turkey. Teams like the LA Lakers will sell their local rights to local TV stations,' claimed the brand marketing director.

A total breakthrough in distributing information about sports teams was the development of online media. The head of CRM at the football team pointed to them as a key product for his team. Each global (or aspiring to become global) team needs its own media platform that allows it to share the latest information and up-to-date content with its fans. Therefore, the majority of top teams have established their own television channels, websites and social media profiles (mainly on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). They facilitate teams controlling their content published online. From the commercial point of view, they generate direct revenue to teams from television subscriptions and paid-for content on teams' websites. As the associate at the sports consultancy said:

... people will [pay] if you can offer them unique, differentiating content they can't just get on YouTube or [the] BBC website – so the real insightful interviews with star players and behind the scenes ... which makes them feel like they are actually inside the [team]. That's when you can generate money.

According to the head of CRM at the football team, another source of income comes from selling space on a team's website to advertisers – the more visitors to the website, the higher the cost of the advertising.

Nevertheless, the benefits from fans following information about their teams on media do not only come down to direct income in teams' budgets. 'They [fans] don't even have to put any money on it, as long as they are involved then that's valuable to us,' noted the commercial director of the football team. The knowledge that information about a particular sports team is followed by millions of people throughout the world is itself valuable as this strengthens the position of the team brand in its contacts with business partners. The commercial director of the football team admitted that some football teams' representatives may not see the connection between the number of the teams' followers on social media and the team's direct revenues, but they sense that it is beneficial for their teams:

... people just think it is great – and it is. ... Even if you don't make any money from them [it] is great! ... to be part of the community that has got millions of people around the world who care about what you're doing makes you feel like you make something significant.

According to the Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, sales of television rights remain one of the largest sources of income for football teams. For the Big Five European football leagues (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK) in the 2014–15 season broadcasting provided the biggest revenue stream (Deloitte 2016b) and the second biggest revenue stream for the first three teams topping the Football Money League table (Deloitte 2016a). According to PWC (2011), in 2010 media rights fees were the third largest category of revenue generated in the global sports industry. It was projected that in 2015 they would rise to US\$35.2 billion. As the above statistics demonstrate, media rights sales are one of the most important revenue streams for sports teams. This is particularly the case for the most established and marketable teams with strong brand equity (Richelieu and Pons 2005; Kim and Trail 2011). Sports teams generate revenue from media who pay them for the right to broadcast their matches. When the number of fans watching the games of a particular team increases, the value of the television rights contracts grows too. Broadcasting rights may be sold by teams themselves (decentralised sales) or by sports associations and entities managing leagues (centralised sales). In the latter case income is shared between the teams in the league. Sznajder (2015) noted that the decentralised system is more convenient for the strongest teams as they are able to negotiate higher profits. In turn, broadcasters use sport to attract viewers and advertisers: 'Major revenue streams for broadcasters are generated through the sales of advertising inventory around television shows or, in the case of many cable television operators, through the sale of subscriptions to their pay-television services' (Westerbeek and Smith 2003: 118).

The development of new media changed the way in which sport is consumed (Kim and Trail 2011). The Internet has become 'a feasible platform to offer access to full-game or highlight reports to a broad audience' (Theysohn 2009: 17) which may soon become an alternative to television reports. Through teams' websites, fans receive up-to-date information about their teams that is not limited to written news items but also covers audio and video content, e.g. coverage of matches and interviews. Teams' social media profiles facilitate direct two-way communication between fans and teams as well as among sports fans themselves who interact and share information about teams with each other (Parganas, Anagnostopoulos and Chadwick 2015). In general teams communicate with their audiences and create positive brand associations via online media (Wallace, Wilson and Miloch 2011;

Yan 2011). As the example of the UK football teams demonstrated, fans intensely search for information about their teams not only on their official platforms – websites and social media profiles – but also on unofficial football websites (McCarthy et al. 2014).

Those media have created new opportunities for teams to generate revenues. On paid-content parts of their websites, sports teams sell their media products directly to fans. Websites of major sports teams are also attractive to advertisers because they generate high traffic coming from fans searching for information. Owing to their unusual ‘stickiness’ these websites have the ability to hold visitors for longer (Westerbeek and Smith 2003: 157). Two-way communication facilitated by social media can enhance fans’ brand experience and lead to increased fan expenditure on various team-related products (Parganas, Anagnostopoulos and Chadwick 2015). Similarly to the teams’ websites, social media are another venue for promoting advertisers’ products to fans. Finally, sports teams gain from the interrelationship between their social media profiles and their websites, as social media support revenue generation by driving traffic to the website (McCarthy et al. 2014). In addition to generating income for their team, fans gathered around its brand on its virtual platforms can be a value on its own. McCarthy et al. (2014) claimed that cultivating the brand community is a team’s long-term aim, which needs to be balanced with the short-term objective of revenue generation. Ideally, the team’s presence on the Internet reflects the commercial objectives of the team and the expectations of its fans.

Clearly global sports teams’ endeavours attract the biggest international audiences, which results in multiple commercial benefits gained by the teams from their overseas fans. In the case of the top teams the number of their foreign fans exceeds the number of domestic fans, hence, the majority of those who follow information about a particular global team worldwide through traditional and online media are mainly foreign-based (Westerbeek and Smith 2003: 16–17):

Where the potential support for the Los Angeles Lakers NBA [team] is limited in the United States to the residents of California and expatriate residents now in other states, there is no such geographic limitation in countries such as New Zealand, Japan and the Netherlands. ... Of the million or so hits received each year by the Lakers’ website, the majority have their origins off-shore.

The richest football league in the world and one of the world’s most recognised sports brands (Kerr and Gladden 2008), the EPL, has a global audience in 211 countries (David and Millward 2015: 390). The attention of its global viewers is reflected in the profits that the league as a whole secures and then shares among all the teams. Over £2bn of the £5.5bn expected to be earned by the EPL from its television rights sales between 2013 and 2016 is predicted to come from international rights sales, and just four Asian countries – Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong – are likely to pay £650m between them (Yueh 2014). The popularity of the EPL teams also manifests itself in the number of their social media followers. According to Deloitte’s Football Money League, in January 2016 Manchester United was the most popular EPL team on social media with 83.1 million followers (on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram combined). Next were Chelsea (56.1 million), Arsenal (46.4 million) and Liverpool (34.5 million) (Deloitte 2016a). Parganas, Anagnostopoulos and Chadwick stated that

cumulative online following of the EPL teams is 'several times the total population of the United Kingdom' (2015: 552). The relationship between satellite fans and their favourite teams has benefited especially from the development of online media as nowadays fans throughout the world may access team-related content instantly regardless of where they live, provided they have access to the Internet. Sports teams try to meet these fans' demands for more information e.g. by tailoring their websites to the needs of multi-lingual users or by providing easy online access to their product (i.e. the game).

Fans' global interest in following their favourite sports teams through media has been demonstrated in existing research. Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) and Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) showed that consuming media content concerning their favourite teams was the most common behaviour through which foreign-based fans of Ajax FC and Liverpool FC showed their support. This applied to both online media and television. Watching games on television was undeniably the most popular activity related to their team undertaken by international Liverpool FC fans (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). More than 85 per cent did it on a weekly basis and 98 per cent at least once a month. Only marginally fewer fans (above 80 per cent) followed team-related information online – through the official team website and unofficial websites managed by team fans. Finally, more than half of the fans watched video highlights on the Internet every week. Online media turned out to be more popular than television when it came to Ajax FC's international fans (the sample in the work of Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) was dominated by American fans). Definitely the highest proportion of those surveyed (more than 90 per cent) obtained information about the Dutch team from its unofficial supporter websites on a weekly basis. More than 80 per cent visited the team's website and watched online video highlights at least once a month. Interestingly, television was the least popular medium, although watching broadcast Ajax games was still one of the four main activities through which foreign-based fans of the team expressed their support. Kerr and Emery's (2011) and Kerr, Smith and Anderson's (2011) studies demonstrated that fans also followed information about their favourite teams outside of the football season: they watched game highlights available online and continued to visit their teams' websites as well as unofficial websites. Data concerning basketball also proved that global basketball teams' endeavours are extremely popular among their foreign-based fans – to such an extent that global teams were more frequently followed on media than domestic basketball teams. For instance, in their study of basketball fans in China, Menefee and Casper (2011) showed that during the season Chinese fans watched more NBA games than national CBA league games. The viewership frequency was estimated at 54 per cent for the NBA compared to 28.9 per cent for the CBA.

Such popularity of media consumption behaviour among global fans of foreign-based teams results from the fact that for them the availability of their teams on media is a substitute for the geographically close relationship that local fans ordinarily have with their favourite teams: 'The absence of geographic proximity may have reinforced the importance of the media to these [fans] and influenced their behaviour' (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011: 26). Even more so because, in the opinion of many marketers, 'a [soccer] match on television is a very close substitute for attending the soccer match "live"' (Westerbeek and Smith 2003: 117). The crucial importance of media for international fans is

illustrated by some linguistic changes: for instance, experiencing a favourite sport and team through media is now described as 'attendance', and is seen as being equally important as attending at the venue (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006). Social media are thus 'becoming the new virtual stadium for international football fans' (Bolle 2016: 301). Having taken into consideration the popularity of this consumption behaviour among fans of global sports team brands and the vital benefits this behaviour brings to these team brands the following hypothesis was posed:

Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between global sports team brand favouriteness and media consumption.

Acknowledging the general view of some interviewees that exclusive digital content is becoming increasingly important for fans, the researcher included questionnaire items to examine how digital content is consumed by fans. She created those questions herself (Questions 5–6) because most of the available scales measuring online media consumption were weak. Additionally, Question 4 was adapted from a one-item online media consumption scale (Byon, Cottingham and Carroll 2010). As far as the items measuring television consumption are concerned, Question 2 was directly drawn from the TV media consumption scale (Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002b). Question 1 was added by the researcher in order to determine whether fans actually watch their teams' games on television. Finally, Question 3 was adapted from the print media consumption scale (Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002b).

2.3.3. Attendance

This variable concerns not only fans' past and current but also intended attendance at the games – domestic or overseas – of their favourite strong global sports team, since many fans may never be able to see their team playing live due to geographic, financial or other reasons. The variable was included in the model on the basis of the literature and the interview discussions.

Gate revenues are considered to be one of the basic commercial benefits gained by strong sports team brands. According to PWC (2011), in 2010 it was the largest source of income globally. Nevertheless, as the report said, 'gate revenues represent a mature market'; hence, it was estimated that between 2011 and 2015 they would show the lowest growth rate compared to other sources of income and by the end of 2015 would reach US\$44.7 billion. In their work published in 2003 Westerbeek and Smith mentioned that at that time in some countries gate receipts were the main source of revenue in some football leagues. For instance, in Spain match day income represented 45 per cent against 38 per cent income generated from television rights fees. However, from the latest data for the Spanish football league (Deloitte 2016b) it is evident that currently the biggest proportion of income comes from broadcasting (48 per cent), while match day revenue is the smallest category and contributes just 21 per cent of the total revenues (Deloitte 2016b). Broadcasting sport live on television immediately affects attendance figures (Westerbeek and Smith 2003), so when live coverage of matches became widespread and sports teams started to achieve considerable revenue from selling their broadcast rights, this was accompanied by a decline in revenue from game

admissions. Despite this, live match attendance is vital for sports teams, because, as stated in the abovementioned Deloitte report, 'the stadium remains a key revenue area directly under a [team]'s control. It also provides the most direct and tangible link between a [team] and its fans, shaping their experience of live football and the match atmosphere that is communicated in broadcasts' (Deloitte 2016b: 32).

The interview data showed that ticket sales are a significant source of revenue for teams, though not in all team sports. Formula 1 is an extreme example because, as the interviewed commercial manager of the Formula 1 team claimed, the teams do not have their own stadiums and do not sell tickets to fans themselves. Ticket fees are paid to Formula 1 management, which then distributes them among the teams. In football, where tickets are sold by teams, the more fans that watch games live, the more revenue the team generates. The only limit is the stadium capacity, as, according to the owner of the publishing company, in the strongest football leagues in Europe 'a lot of the [teams] are running at full capacity'. In his opinion some teams' management treat ticket sale revenues as 'easy money' (next to television revenues) and presume that they do not have to do anything in order to attract people to the venues. A full stadium means not only direct revenue from fans but also atmosphere during games. In the words of the commercial director of the football team, 'people who come to matches are the most important people because they make it special, they provide the passion, they provide the atmosphere' and as a result attract potential fans, media and sponsors to the team.

In the conducted interviews the experts presented two different approaches towards setting up admission fees. For instance, the director of the sports marketing consultancy 1 argued that teams need to maximise their revenues – including their gate revenues – in order to grow and, therefore, they cannot set prices of tickets too low, although lower admission fees are usually among the top fan enquiries addressed to teams' management. Others claimed that there is still space for reducing the price of tickets and making them more accessible for potential fans. Long term this will lead to an increase in teams' revenues as a whole, as it will strengthen other revenue streams. The commercial director of the football team claimed: 'There is a business model that says make it much cheaper to come and raise all your revenue through your sponsorship and make sure you have a full ground. ... And football [teams] are in real danger of losing sight of that, pricing people out of the marketplace.' The commercial manager of the Formula 1 team followed much the same line, saying that high ticket prices may deter fans from watching their team and, further, from sport as people will prefer to spend their money on other competing entertainment:

For the price of taking a family of four to watch the Grand Prix at Silverstone you could actually take them all the way to Florida for a week. So it's expensive and it needs to be able to demonstrate value for money.

Relatively speaking, global fans rarely have the opportunity to watch their favourite teams playing live; hence, they usually do not contribute to their gate revenues. Nevertheless, according to the PR consultancy director, if they happen to appear at the stadium of their favourite global team, they leave more money there than local fans, who, except for buying tickets, usually do not engage with the team brand in any other way. In addition to purchasing tickets, foreign fans spend money on the match day

experience (e.g. merchandise, memorabilia, hospitality), which makes them even more profitable for a team than season ticket holders – based on expenditure on a single match day. This calculation, as that interviewee claimed, may imply that:

the [teams] ... don't want the same fans every week if they could help it – even if that would mean steady revenue. ... [They] would rather sell individual tickets to new people every week because then they're gonna sell more merchandise and more of a match day experience. [In English football,] there is more money [made] over ... 25 match days over the year than [is] made as TV revenue.

Sports marketing literature on attendance is extensive, as game attendance is the most straightforward and still significant source of revenue. Researchers have been mainly interested in understanding why fans attend games, how to retain them and how to increase attendance. Psychological motives such as eustress, self-esteem, family motive, aesthetics and entertainment explain attendance only partially (Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002b: 9). A strong positive association has been identified between attendance and on-the-field results in many studies (e.g. Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005; Irwin, Zwick and Sutton 1999). In the opinion of Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) the explanation of why winning records result in increased attendance lies in the BIRG (Basking In Reflected Glory) mechanism (Cialdini et al. 1976). Lambrecht, Kaefer and Ramenofsky (2009) in their study of spectators at golf tournaments suggested that overall spectator satisfaction leads to increased attendance and may be enhanced by sportscape factors defined as service extensions and the physical surroundings of a sports event. Highly identified fans tend to attend matches of their teams more frequently (Sutton et al. 1997). Regardless of their attendance motives, organised groups of fans at the stadium improve atmosphere (Theysohn et al. 2009: 306), increasing the overall quality of a sports event.

For a sports team, fans who attend live games equal ticket sales revenue. Ticketing is one of the traditional sources of income for sports teams. It does not come as a surprise then that Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt (2005), when assessing the importance of team brand equity in the German football league Bundesliga, used stadium attendance as a measure of the team's economic success. They even went a step further, saying that 'the stadium visit is considered the core product of the team and supposed to influence all other products offered' (2005: 507). For instance, the higher the attendance numbers, the higher the media and sponsorship contracts negotiated by the team (Barajas and Urrutia 2007; Wakefield 2007). When on-the-field success and brand equity improve, attendance and the number of tickets sold to live matches increase (e.g. Gladden and Funk 2002; Kerr and Gladden 2008). Hence, researchers analysing the consequences of team brand equity mentioned ticket sales as one of them (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Gladden and Milne 1999; Ross 2006; Kerr and Gladden 2008). Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) suggested that an increase in ticket sales is often followed by an increase in their prices. Teams take this step in order to further capitalise on higher fan interest. Besides, some teams, as Richelieu (2013) stated, manage to multiply their ticket sales revenue owing to the fact that a significant part of their season ticket holders are businesses. For instance, in the case of some NHL teams this group contributes to even 80 per cent of the overall number of season ticket holders, which was described by Richelieu as the 'VIPisation of sport'. While

these VIP fans are a highly profitable source of income for teams, the author warned that this process brings ‘the risk of creating a barrier between the “real” sport fans and the [team]’ (2013: 411).

While live game attendance is one of the best studied behaviours through which fans demonstrate support for their favourite team, to a lesser extent it concerns foreign-based fans. Owing to the geographical distance from their team this group of fans has the limited opportunity to watch it in person at the stadium. Most of them may never be able to enjoy such an experience. Hence, satellite fans of global sports teams contribute to those teams’ gate revenues less than they contribute to, for instance, the team’s merchandise sales revenue. For example, the satellite fans of Ajax FC in the study by Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) rarely bought tickets to the Dutch team games. Almost 74 per cent of them never bought tickets to matches played by the team domestically and more than 83 per cent of those surveyed never purchased tickets to its overseas games. However, as Kerr and Gladden stated, despite the fact that satellite fans rarely watch their teams playing live, still ‘popular [teams] have the ability to generate considerable [ticket sales] revenue due to their strong brand equity abroad’ (2008: 72) whenever they undertake overseas promotional tours. For instance, 109,318 spectators watched Real Madrid against Manchester United in 2014 at Michigan Stadium, which is the US soccer attendance record (Niziolek 2014). One year later at the Melbourne Cricket Ground Real Madrid met the other football team from Manchester – Manchester City – and this match attracted 99,382 fans (Hore 2015). A comparable crowd of 95,000 spectators watched Liverpool FC at the same stadium in 2013 (*talkSPORT* 2015). As the works of Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) demonstrated, while acquiring tickets to Liverpool FC games is the least popular consumption activity among its satellite fans related to their support, respondents ‘went to great lengths to see their heroes perform live’ (Kerr and Emery 2016: 521). Approximately 60 per cent of them admitted that they travelled to the UK to watch the team live at Anfield at least once a season (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). These results may be read in the context of research by Hognestad (2006) who revealed that Norwegian fans of the EPL teams are often members of the teams’ fan clubs and travel to England individually or with other fan-club members to watch their teams playing live (68.3 per cent of those surveyed admitted it). Hognestad reported that football expeditions to England have become so common that there are specialised travel agencies in Norway that ‘have made football trips into a major business priority’ (2006: 450) and offer football fans packages including flight, accommodation and match tickets. The fact that some fans of global teams to a certain degree contribute to their teams’ gate revenues – by either participating in their overseas promotional events or attending games at home stadiums – led the researcher to derive the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 8: There is a positive relationship between global sports team brand favouriteness and attendance.

The scale used to measure game attendance (and attendance intention) in this study is a combination of questions adapted from existing research and questions created by the researcher. Question 2 was directly adapted from the one-item attendance intentions scale (Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002b).

Question 1, intended to examine past attendance behaviour, Question 3, examining attendance intention, and Question 4, examining present attendance behaviour, were added by the researcher.

2.3.4. Loyalty

While the loyalty construct has been widely discussed in sports marketing literature, surprisingly it was not directly identified by interviewees as an outcome of strong global brands. Only a few of the experts signalled that having loyal fans is beneficial for the team they consider as their favourite.

The interviewees indicated the importance of fans' everyday activities in which their favourite team brand is present. Regardless of where a fan is based – whether it is within geographic proximity of the team or overseas – numerous behaviours indicate that a loyal fan lives the brand of his or her team, engaging with it on a day-to-day basis, purchasing products or actively consuming content generated by his or her favourite team brand. It is the aim of many sports team brand management that their fans incorporate the brand into their lives in a way described by the brand marketing director:

When you go on holiday or you're on a business trip we want you to have our app on your phone, which you bought so you can look at our scores. We want you to take your suitcase and put your trainers on and go to a gym and have our logo on it. And if you are not already carrying NBA branded or LA Lakers branded luggage, that's ultimately what we want.

As some interviewees stated, many teams, having appreciated the significance of their loyal fans, actively grow their future generations starting from a very early age by running grassroots coaching programmes domestically and abroad. They also initiate junior membership schemes for young fans. This is owing to the fact that these children will decide what team they will be supporting. If they are approached at the right age, they never change their favourite team and – in the words of the commercial director of the football team – 'you've got them for life'. This was confirmed by the director of the sports marketing consultancy 1:

a normal age to start supporting a team is about 8 years old, then you never change. So you may buy a Mac, but one day you may buy a PC. But if you are an MU fan, you will never be a fan of Chelsea. ... The team might not be successful anymore or you might not even go to the match or like them, but you are still a fan. You can't help it and that's the emotional tie.

In general research, loyalty is defined as affective commitment (Kumar et al. 1994 cited in Choi et al. 2010: 474) that can motivate people to continue the relationship with the brand (Hansen and Hem 2004). Subsequently, in the sports context loyalty should be understood as affective commitment that can motivate fans to continue the relationship with their favourite sports team brand. In the sports marketing literature loyalty is linked to the longevity of commitment between a fan and the team that he or she supports (Harris and Elliott 2007: 129). Mahony, Madrigal and Howard (2000) indicated that loyalty of sports team fans is manifested mentally (attitudinal loyalty) and in their behaviour (behavioural loyalty). Both dimensions are linked to each other, meaning that a fan's attitude can guide his or her behaviour (Dwyer, Greenhalgh and LeCrom 2015). Loyal fans show a positive attitude towards their team and its brand as well as undertaking repeat actions towards it. Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler (2008) predicted that attitudinal loyalty is an antecedent of behavioural loyalty and proved that loyal behaviour is influenced by fans' brand attitudes. Dwyer, Greenhalgh and LeCrom

acknowledged that sport team loyalty mirrors brand loyalty as it includes the same components – ‘both attitudinal formation and behavioral consistency’ (2015: 644).

Research interest in loyalty in sports probably stems from the fact that its understanding is crucial to sports brands’ ability to generate revenue. According to Bridgewater (2010), loyal fans provide increased profits to team brands over time. This results not only from repeating the same consumption behaviour but also from undertaking new consumption activities. Strong brands in general are financially valuable (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000; De Chernatony and McDonald 1998), as they generate high levels of loyalty and increased sales. Strong global sports team brands attract highly loyal fans owing to their ability to establish strong emotional relationships with their fans (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005; Richelieu and Boulaire 2005; Richelieu and Pons 2006; Bridgewater 2007). Brand loyalty ‘creates opportunities for product extensions beyond the core product’; it also helps when the on-the-field team performance falls, as it ‘ensures a more stable following’ (Gladden and Funk 2001: 68). So, within sports marketing, the discussion about loyalty receives an additional dimension, as the reasons for which fans remain loyal to sports team brands are not identical to those for which people are loyal to non-sports brands. Chadwick (2006: 153) noted: ‘Unlike other products, sport is often consumed in an irrational way. Logic tells us that if a product continually fails to live up to expectations, people will stop buying it. In sport, this logic does not always hold.’ In the case of sports teams, loyalty is particularly long-lived, as the teams often succeed in turning new young generations into loyal fans who are then emotionally attached to them over the course of their lives (Harris and Elliot 2007; Westerbeek and Smith 2003). The optimal time for such loyalty to be built is childhood and adolescence (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013). If a fan becomes loyal at an early age, he or she rarely switches his or her allegiance to a competitor team (Apostolopoulou and Gladden 2007).

Existing research in the area of sports team brands indicates that brand loyalty is linked to brand equity construct. Some researchers consider team brand loyalty to be one of the consequences of team brand strength (e.g. Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005; Ross 2006). Having assessed the brand equity of German football league teams from their fans’ perspective, Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt (2005) saw brand loyalty as an outcome of team brand equity and one of the subjectively measured team brand success criteria. Ross (2006), in his conceptual spectator-based brand equity framework, perceived team loyalty to be a consequence of team brand equity, not its component – in line with Keller’s conceptualisation of brand loyalty ‘as a manifestation of brand equity’ (Ross 2006: 28) and as opposed to Aaker’s (1991) brand equity framework where brand loyalty is one of the brand equity components.

Retaining a loyal fan is less expensive than attracting a new one; hence, in order for sports organisations to better understand their fans and respond to their expectations the literature offered them a range of classifications of fans based on their degree of loyalty (e.g. Stewart and Smith 1997; Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw 1999; Mahony, Madrigal and Howard 2000; Tapp and Clowes 2002). Among various segments a particularly interesting one in the context of this study is a group of ‘E Loyal’ fans identified among Sunderland AFC fans (Bridgewater 2010). As opposed to the other four groups of Sunderland fans, ‘E Loyal’ ones do not attend games but, despite this, express high loyalty levels.

They are 'attitudinally' loyal fans, active and more knowledgeable than other groups, 'perhaps in compensation for their lack of attendance, to prove their "true fan" status' (2010: 70). The research showed that this segment mainly consists of expatriate fans or fans who, owing to their work commitments, cannot watch games live. However, their characteristics and loyalty pattern could also be applied to overseas fans of global sports teams. As Bridgewater claimed (2010), many of these 'E loyal', virtual fans are foreign-based, live far from their favourite team and use technology to demonstrate their support for it. Still they may be loyal towards their team as much as its local fans.

In general, however, fans of foreign-based teams received relatively little attention in the context of the loyalty construct. Kerr and Emery (2011) and Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011), in their studies of satellite fans of Liverpool FC and Ajax FC football teams respectively, showed that these fans expressed intense loyalty towards their teams, from which, in the words of one Ajax FC fan, 'you will never "recover"'. A total of 96 per cent of Liverpool fans and above 86 per cent of Ajax fans admitted that they would never abandon their team. The fact that these groups of fans do not live in proximity to their favourite teams does not mean that they should be considered 'fair-weather' fans (Wann and Branscombe 1990). On the contrary:

... in the absence of geographic ties, one might expect foreign [fans] to be more fickle and their support for overseas teams less stable. This was, however, not the case and some supporters were quite adamant about their devotion (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011: 25).

Kerr and Emery concluded that satellite fans 'appear to be more loyal than might have previously been thought' (2011: 892). Taking into consideration high levels of loyalty that the strongest team brands generate among their fans (including overseas ones) the following relationship was hypothesised:

Hypothesis 9: There is a positive relationship between global sports team brand favouriteness and loyalty.

The loyalty variable was included in the model mainly based on the literature; hence, the items measuring it were also drawn from the existing research. The study utilises closely related scales of loyalty as the basis for a combined new scale consisting of four items. Questions 1 and 4 were adapted to the needs of this study from the brand loyalty scale (Choi et al. 2010). Question 3 was adapted from the continued loyalty scale developed by Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002b), while Question 2 was drawn directly from this scale.

2.3.5. Advocacy

This variable was included in the model mostly on the basis of the interviews. Compared to some other outcome variables, this one was not as frequently discussed by the experts. Nevertheless, it received considerable attention. Some interviewees agreed that fans are valuable brand ambassadors responsible for recruiting new fans. In their opinion advocacy comes down to activities undertaken by particularly active members of a sports team's fan community leading to recruiting new fans for this team. According to the president of the global communications agency, 'Fans are the best brand advocates you can find.' By wearing the team colours and actively supporting the team they 'make

noise and that noise can influence other people' who then often become fans of the team. The more fans a sports team has, the more new fans it is likely to get then. In a fan community a team brand ambassador acts as an influencer over the wider fan base. In the opinion of the associate at the sports consultancy, it is the members of the core fan base especially who act as advocates towards more transient groups of fans who without their recommendation would drift away from the team:

There are some passive fans ... they are there because the team is winning or because they like the sport and it's an interesting match of teams or something. But generally if you don't have a core fan base then I don't think you're even gonna get those transient fans. Because the core fan base is the advocate that often gets the transient fans in.

Teams frequently invest in their relationship with active fans in order to make it deeper, according to the commercial director of the football team 'to the extent [that] they [the fans] become advocates'. At the same time they invest in their future revenues. The brand marketing director suggested the same: 'fans getting fans getting more fans builds a base which you [as a team] can market.'

Fans can also advocate the brand in a traditional way by 'spreading the word' among their friends and relatives. However, new technology also now allows them to advocate their favourite team to people outside this group. Nowadays virtual communities have become a forum where fans can easily recommend their favourite team brand to others. The opportunities that new interactive media give to their users facilitate this process: fans can give their feedback about sports teams, generate or use online content and, finally, share it with others. Hence, it is important that a team provides virtual platforms such as its website and official social media channels, and uses them to interact and build a deeper and stronger relationship with fans who are brand advocates. As the associate at the sports consultancy said, skilled management of social media channels empowers sports teams to encourage fans to share information about them with fellow fans: 'Having tailored content for the iPad or for a mobile and getting your athletes ... to create that content ... you can get your fans to do the marketing for you if they are talking about you online.'

On a global basis, fan clubs are a hub gathering foreign-based fans of the sports team and influencing other potential fans. Therefore, some teams try to strengthen their relationship with their fan clubs throughout the world, and, to reach broad audiences, allow them to officially represent the team in a particular territory. They cooperate with their fan clubs in order to – as the commercial director of the football team expressed – 'empower them to grow the brand'. Within the scope of such activities teams' management provide particular tools that make it easier for people to set up a fan club. For instance, the commercial director of the football team stated that his team delivers to its international fans 'a supporter's starter pack' covering information and materials necessary to create a fan club; it is designated for one individual engaged in creating and running the team's fan club in a particular city in the world. Such fans are responsible for a number of issues: 'they get the people to join and they organise screenings and they organise shirts sales and they organise membership.'

In the opinion of some experts, by undertaking CSR programmes and initiatives in foreign markets global sports teams grow best ambassadors for their brands. The owner of the publishing company used the example of a sports team community programme organised in cooperation with regional

authorities, which might have the potential to attract new fans to this team who subsequently could encourage other local citizens to support it:

... if you say you know we're gonna partner with a non-global partner ... but we will create with them a community programme ... you can do some very strong work at a local level which really interacts with people and engages with people and that community ... and then they will become your brand ambassadors. Supposing you put 10,000 people through your community football programme. Those 10,000 people are all brand ambassadors for your brand. Suddenly the numbers mount up and you have a presence which is permanent.

Fan recommendation was rarely discussed in the existing literature as a benefit achieved by strong global team brands from their fanships. In several studies that assessed the relationship between team brand equity dimensions and behavioural intentions, the word-of-mouth (recommend) intention was included in a multi-item measure of behavioural intentions of sports teams fans (usually along with items assessing future game attendance and team-related purchases) (e.g. Biscaia et al. 2013; Biscaia et al. 2016). However, the existing sports literature appreciated the importance of personal recommendation and saw it as influential and credible. Rein, Kotler and Shields (2006) claimed that its vital role results from the fact that it is built on close personal relationships – relationships between members of a family, friends or members of a wider community, for instance a fan community. Besides, personal informal communication conveyed by fans who are not members of the sports organisation they recommend to others is in general perceived as trustworthy (Kim and Trail 2011). In their conceptual framework Kim and Trail (2011) among several fan consumption behaviours included so-called 'word-of-mouth' as a consequence of fans–sports organisation relationship quality.

For Yoshida et al. positive word-of-mouth, defined as fans' 'external, outward focus on creating favorable impressions of a sport team, enthusiastic fans, and the fan community in the social universe beyond the fan community' (2015: 108), is one of fans' extra-role behaviours in communities of fans of particular teams. Those who serve as brand advocates 'communicate with one another and with followers and become strong referents for promoting the social desirability of engaging in fan community-related behaviors' (2015: 117). Dwyer, Greenhalgh and LeCrom (2015) claimed that advocating or spreading the word about the team brand is just an example of brand evangelism. Such a pro-brand 'Fan behavior [is] predicated by one's relationship with a team brand and activated through the fervent dissemination of team-related beliefs and team-centered interactions' (2015: 649). Such behaviours facilitate connection between sports properties and fans and contribute to the process of building strong brand communities (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006; Dwyer, Greenhalgh and LeCrom (2015).

The role of personal recommendation has taken on a particular meaning in today's world, when many sports fans turn into ambassadors of their favourite teams (Richelieu and Boulaire 2005; Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006; Richelieu 2013). As Richelieu and Boulaire stated, nowadays the need of some fans to be an advocate for their favourite brand results from the complexity of the post-modern sports product, which on account of its social layers provides fans with a platform wherein they can build social ties: '[Fans] get together around a product, which enables them to experience a passion, or around a brand, of which they become ambassadors' (2005: 25). The closer the relationship with the

team brand, the greater the possibility that fans become ambassadors (or 'fan-actors') and co-creators of the team, taking 'possession of the sport brand' (Richelieu 2013: 409) and participating in developing their own brand experience inside and outside sports venues. Richelieu (2013) stated that in today's globalised world teams can widely benefit from this relationship. Personal recommendation has only recently become so powerful owing to the rise of the new media that facilitated the process, increasing the opportunity for communication about the brand and spreading information throughout the virtual fans' communities. Foreign fans of sports teams have more opportunities than ever to participate in this process and to become their favourite team's brand ambassadors – either face to face or via virtual interfaces. While in general this is an informal process and all sports team fans may participate in it if they wish, marketers try to use the power of word-of-mouth to gain an impact on conversations about the team brand. To this end they encourage fans to send particular information (concerning the brand) through their networks ('viral marketing') or hire professionals to get involved in the discussion in order to stimulate them ('guerilla marketing') (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006). It seems that advocacy behaviour – sometimes more informal, sometimes coordinated to some extent by the teams' management – is quite common among most active sports team fans throughout the world. Therefore, the researcher proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 10: There is a positive relationship between global sports team brand favouriteness and advocacy.

In the light of the lack of scales appropriate for measuring the sports team brand advocacy construct, the community recommendation intentions scale (Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann 2005) was employed as a starting point for the advocacy scale development in this study. Question 2 in this section was adapted and Question 1 was drawn directly from it. Additionally, Questions 3 and 4 were added by the researcher to examine fans' readiness to recommend additional team brands' products.

3. Conclusions

This chapter outlined the model development process and discussed the variables included in the model of antecedents and outcomes of global sports team brand favouriteness hypothesised on the basis of initial interviews with brand experts and a systematic review of the literature on sports branding. Therefore, the variables were discussed in the light of information obtained from these two sources of knowledge. Due to the use of a practitioner perspective the model is grounded in reality and has potential to be relevant to sports brand managers (Panda and Gupta 2014; Toffel 2016). The first stage of this study also informed the questionnaire development which was used in the second research phase – online survey – to collect responses from Polish fans of global sports teams.

The hypothesised model consisted of eleven variables: global sports team brand favouriteness – the central variable in the model, brand favouriteness antecedents (i.e. players, team success, engagement through marketing, media exposure, brand identity) and brand favouriteness outcomes

(i.e. product purchase, attendance, media consumption, loyalty, advocacy). Brand favouriteness is a new concept that emerged from the interviews and was defined as the particular feeling that a sports fan has towards his or her favourite global sports team brand, i.e. the global sports team brand that he or she chooses over other similar brands as the one that is particularly close to him or her. In the course of the inductive process the hypotheses concerning the causal relationships between the variables in the initial conceptual model were established to be subsequently tested in the next explanatory phase of research. The results of this phase of the research are provided in the next chapter.

Chapter V: Data analysis and interpretation of results

Overview

This chapter focuses on the detailed analysis of the second (quantitative Polish fans' survey) and third stage (qualitative interviews with Polish fans) of this research. The quantitative data analysis starts with information about the survey respondents and the descriptive statistics for the variables forming the brand favouriteness model. Then the results of an exploratory factor analysis undertaken to validate the questionnaire scales are presented along with the assessment of the scales' reliability. Finally, the results of regression analyses indicate the nature and strength of the relationships between the variables in the brand favouriteness model. The chapter goes on to examine the results of interviews with Polish sports fans conducted with the aim of examining the reliability, validity and generalisability of survey results and triangulating various methods used in this research. In the last part of this chapter all the findings are summarised and interpreted.

1. Quantitative data analysis

1.1. Initial analysis of survey data

Initial description of the collected data. The first step in the data-analysis process was to generate descriptive statistics to provide a summary of the information about the sample and the observations that were made. These statistics formed the basis of the initial description of the collected data.

Information about the respondents. The sample was dominated by male respondents, who made up 89.1 per cent of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were young people (18–34 years old), who contributed to approximately 90 per cent of the overall number of respondents. The biggest group was fans that fall into the age range 18–24 years (61.1 per cent). The next significant group of respondents aged 25–34 years is half the size. The vast majority of fans who participated in the survey have either university or secondary education (44.1 per cent and 44.3 per cent respectively).

In terms of household monthly net income in Polish złoty (PLN) and place of residence, it was much more difficult to indicate any dominant group of respondents. Fans who completed the questionnaire represented a range of places of residence. The smallest group comprised those who live in small towns (population of under 20,000), while other respondents were distributed more or less equally across other types of place of residence (i.e. villages, towns with population 20,000–100,000, cities with 100,000–500,000 inhabitants and cities of over 500,000 inhabitants). As far as income was concerned, this was the most sensitive question as about 1/3 of the respondents preferred not to provide any information. Among the respondents who decided to answer this question, a reasonably big group (also about 1/3) was made up of those whose monthly income exceeded 3,000 PLN (see Appendix 5 for details about the sample characteristics).

Football teams were the most popular global sports teams among respondents to the survey (see Appendix 6). The four most frequently selected teams were: FC Barcelona (11.4 per cent), Manchester United (10.4 per cent), Borussia Dortmund and Juventus (both 9.8 per cent). The basketball team Chicago Bulls is the most popular non-football team (2 per cent). Among those surveyed there were also fans of Formula 1 (with Ferrari 1 being the most popular team, selected by 1.5 per cent of the individuals).

These results suggest that the study is biased towards football fans. The majority of the survey sample represented fans of global football teams (546 respondents), while only some respondents selected Formula 1 and basketball teams (16 and 48 respectively).⁴ Sample sizes for basketball and Formula 1 fans were small so differences in demographics need to be treated with caution. While the majority in all three groups of fans (football, basketball and Formula 1) were male, they dominated especially among supporters of basketball teams, as no female respondent admitted to supporting a basketball team. In terms of the respondents' age most fans fall into two categories 18–24 and 25–34. However, again basketball fans stand out from other fans, as they seem to be older – the biggest group of basketball supporters are aged 25–34. Football and Formula 1 fans are younger as most of them fall into the 18–24 category. For the place of residence variable the differences between various groups of fans are more complex. Formula 1 fans usually live in big towns/cities (20,000–100,000; 100,000–500,000; 500,000+) and are equally distributed across these three types of place of residence. Most basketball fans also live in towns/cities 20,000+, nevertheless the data showed that the bigger the town, the bigger the number of basketball fans residing there. Football fans live first of all in big towns 20,000–100,000 and 100,000–500,000, however, as opposed to basketball and Formula 1 fans, a significant number live in villages. Finally, as mentioned earlier, the majority of the surveyed fans have received either secondary or university education. Nevertheless, basketball fans seem to be the best educated compared to Formula 1 and football supporters: more of them have received university than secondary education, while in the case of football and Formula 1 fans it is the opposite. See Appendix 7 for the details.⁵

As explained in Chapter III section 4.4, the researcher aimed to obtain responses from a variety of fans by publishing the link to the online questionnaire on various websites, addressed specifically to fans of each of the three sports: Formula 1, basketball and football. These were fan discussion forums, websites of global sports teams' fan clubs in Poland and, finally, publicly available sports news pages of the most popular general information portals (Onet.pl, WP.pl and Interia.pl). First and foremost, however, the link was placed on the *Przegląd Sportowy* sports daily website and on its Facebook profile. This is the oldest and best-selling Polish sports daily addressed to fans of various sports; hence the researcher could have expected that through its websites she would be able to collect a satisfying and varied sample.

⁴ The sample size was 614; four respondents did not select a team from any of these three sports.

⁵ The household monthly net income variable was not included in the analysis as approximately 1/3 of all respondents, as stated earlier, chose not to reveal any information concerning it.

The fact that football fans in the sample outnumbered other fans can be explained in two ways. Firstly, the research design did not assume that respondents would choose their favourite team in each of the three sports – in the opening survey question they were asked to select their favourite team (one team) from the list of global teams from various disciplines. As a result, unsatisfactory sample sizes for Formula 1 and basketball did not enable any comparison between football, basketball and Formula 1 fans in terms of their favouriteness. Secondly, football is definitely the most popular team sport in Poland⁶ and the sample reflects this trend. Soccer is commonly referred to as a global game and the European football leagues are considered to be the strongest football divisions.

The demographic profile of respondents of the survey reflects the demographic profile of Polish fans of team sports (mainly football teams) from other studies. The majority of Polish football⁷ fans in the works by Hadzik, Tomik and Szromek (2011) and Dziegiel and Lucinski (2015) were male, 18–34 years old and well educated (had either secondary or university education). A study of football and volleyball fans from Łódź (Polish city) proved that the majority of them were male with secondary education or in the course of studies (Łódź University 2010). If those studies' participants were compared with the survey respondents in this research it is evident that they all demonstrated similar demographic characteristics. Moreover, Hadzik, Tomik and Szromek indicated (2011: 57) that demographic characteristics of the fans in their research to some extent reflected the demographic profile of fans from other countries attending the games at the UEFA Euro 2004 tournament – Cadima Ribeiro et al. 2004 (cited in Hadzik, Tomik and Szromek 2011: 57) discovered that those who dominated among fans watching live that tournament were male (above 80 per cent) and 20–45 year olds. Due to the fact that Polish fans in this study are similar to those from the Hadzik, Tomik and Szromek work it can be assumed that they should then demonstrate a similar demographic profile to the fans from the Cadima Ribeiro et al. 2004 study.

Descriptive statistics for the variables forming the brand favouriteness model. Descriptive statistics including mean, mode, median and standard deviation were calculated for brand favouriteness, the central variable in the model (i.e. Total Brand Favouriteness), brand favouriteness antecedents (i.e. Total Players, Total Team Success, Total Engagement through Marketing, Total Media Exposure, Total Brand Identity) and brand favouriteness outcomes (i.e. Total Product Purchase, Total Attendance, Total Media Consumption, Total Loyalty, Total Advocacy). The details can be found in Appendix 8 and Appendix 9.

The mean for the Total Brand Favouriteness variable was very high. It equalled approximately 18.69, while the minimum and maximum scores were 4 and 20 respectively.

For the antecedent variables – Total Players, Total Team Success, Total Engagement through Marketing and Total Media Exposure – the scores appeared to be rather normally distributed, which

⁶ Football is the most popular sport in Poland according to some researchers (e.g. Sznajder 2015), market data available (ARC Rynek i Opinia 2013; CBOS 2016), and finally the prevalent opinion.

⁷ Most of the available research on Polish fans is focused on football fans probably due to the significant popularity of this sports discipline in Poland.

indicated that the respondents' answers were diverse. This was reflected in the reasonably low means: 11.69, 13.77, 28.5 and 14.39 respectively. The distribution of scores for the Total Brand Identity variable was similar to the Total Brand Favouriteness variable. Most of the respondents gave the highest answers to the questions forming the brand identity scale.

As far as the brand favouriteness outcomes were concerned, the scores for Total Product Purchase and Total Attendance were normally distributed. This, along with reasonably low means (17.05 and 12.81 respectively), suggested that the respondents selected a range of available answers to the questions forming both product purchase and attendance scales. The shape of the distribution of another outcome variable – the Total Advocacy – was also closer to normal. The distribution of scores for the next two variables, Total Media Consumption and Total Loyalty indicated that the respondents most frequently selected the highest possible answers. Hence it did not come as a surprise that the means for those two variables were high (25.57 and 18.91 respectively).

For most of the variables in the brand favouriteness model there were a few respondents who answered differently from the others (outliers). However, the researcher did not exclude them from the analysis at this stage because the original means and corresponding 5 per cent trimmed means for particular variables did not vary much. This indicated that these outlying cases did not pose a significant problem because they did not have a strong influence on the original means (Pallant 2005: 62). The outlier analysis did not reveal any outliers for the Total Team Success or Total Product Purchase variables, probably because there were no respondents whose answers differed greatly from those of others.

1.2. Factor analysis

Responses to 53 questionnaire items were subjected to factor analysis undertaken with a purpose of data reduction and revealing underlying patterns (Yong and Pierce 2013). As mentioned in the previous chapter the process also served refining the measurement scales and improving their validity. Three separate factor analyses were conducted for the items measuring the global sports team 'brand favouriteness', the global sports team 'brand favouriteness antecedents' and the global sports team 'brand favouriteness outcomes'. Factor analysis was performed based on the steps recommended by Pallant (2005): assessment of the suitability of the data for factor analysis, which covered two issues – sample size and the factorability of the data; factor extraction; factor rotation and interpretation.

As far as the assessment of the data is concerned, as indicated in Chapter III section 4.5, the sample size of 614 was big enough to run factor analysis. In terms of the data factorability (i.e. at least some correlations between variables exist) a few tests were employed to examine it. For all three factor analyses the inspection of the correlation matrix revealed some correlation coefficients greater than 0.3, which suggested that factor analysis would be appropriate. Furthermore, The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy value was well above a minimum value of 0.6: 0.828 in 'brand favouriteness antecedents' factor analysis; 0.853 in 'brand favouriteness outcomes' factor analysis

and 0.808 in 'brand favouriteness' factor analysis. Finally, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity in the case of all three factor analyses were significant ($p=.000$).

Once it was decided that the data were suitable for conducting a factor analysis, separate factor analyses were performed on the scales' items measuring antecedent variables, outcome variables and brand favouriteness variable. First, the number of factors describing underlying relationships in these sets of variables was determined. According to Pallant, this involves balancing two needs – 'the need to find a simple solution with as few factors as possible; and the need to explain as much of the variance in the original data set as possible' (2005: 175). Above all, factor analysis serves data exploration. Therefore, the statistical criteria discussed below are to provide guidance and facilitate the decision of the researcher, but much depends also on the researcher's own interpretation and judgement (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007; Pallant 2005). For the details please see also Appendix 10. Using the Kaiser's criterion, factors with eigenvalues of one and above were identified in the course of three independent factor analyses, where the eigenvalue of a factor signifies 'the amount of the total variance explained by that factor' (Pallant 2005: 175). It was followed by Catell's scree test which helps to visually assess the factor eigenvalues displayed in a line plot (Pallant 2005). As far as the factor analysis performed on the items measuring brand favouriteness antecedents, based on the Kaiser's criterion, six factors with eigenvalues above one were identified and they explained 60.06 per cent of the variance. The screeplot showed a clear break after the third component. Also six factors with eigenvalues exceeding one, explaining 66.23 per cent of the total variance, were revealed in the case of factor analysis performed on the brand favouriteness outcomes' items. The inspection of the screeplot demonstrated – like in the previous factor analysis – that the slope of the curve levels off after the third factor. Based on the knowledge of data the researcher decided to retain for further investigation six factors in each of these two factor analyses (as suggested by the Kaiser's criterion), as they contributed to the explanation of a significant part of the variance in the data. Finally, in the last factor analysis conducted on the items measuring brand favouriteness only one eigenvalue above one based on the Kaiser's criterion was identified. It was also reflected in the screeplot where a clear break was revealed after the first component. This single eigenvalue explained 70.37 per cent of the variance.

The last stage of factor analysis focused on interpretation of the retained factors. In order for this to happen the factors were 'rotated' using direct oblimin rotation. Primarily, both oblique and orthogonal rotations were requested; however, because of the correlations between factors, oblique rotation was preferred. In the direct oblimin rotation process, only the items with a cut-off of 0.3 (Pallant 2005) were taken into consideration in the factor interpretation. Out of these items with strong loadings, those that loaded on multiple factors were removed. Additionally, if in any case fewer than three items loaded on the same factor, these were dropped too. As a result of two separate rotations, five 'brand favouriteness antecedents' factors and five 'brand favouriteness outcomes' factors were interpreted. The third rotation was not performed since, as mentioned above, only one component was retained earlier in the factor extraction procedure on the brand favouriteness scale items.

When the factor analysis process was completed, the Cronbach's alphas were computed for each scale in order to test their internal consistency reliability. They were well above 0.7 for most of the scales. The Cronbach's alphas for three factors labelled 'players/athletes', 'media (TV) exposure' and 'interaction' were 0.682, 0.591 and 0.634 respectively, and so were lower than 0.7 but still within the acceptable limits. According to Van de Ven and Ferry (1979 cited in Mangaliso 1995: 240–241), if a three-item scale measures a broad construct, then the Cronbach's alpha should fall between 0.55 and 0.70 for a moderately broad construct and between 0.35 and 0.55 for a very broad construct. Taking into consideration that the variables in this study were considered as moderately broad, the reliability of the scales was evaluated as moderate to high. The existing research has not provided a clear definition of broad, moderately broad and narrow constructs; hence, the researcher based her judgement on the examples drawn from the literature. For instance, Athiyainan and O'Donnell (1994) described the variables they measured in their study – physical facilities, academic staff and learning outcomes as moderately broad constructs. 'Combined income' is an example of a narrow construct because 'it only involves the recipient's income from a few sources' (Grogger and Karoly 2005: 157). Interesting reflection on broad and narrow constructs was expressed by Viswanathan (2010). He treated broad and abstract constructs evenly; the same as narrow and concrete constructs. Psychological constructs are usually abstract, in contrast to physical or physiological constructs that may be expected to be concrete and narrow. However, even some constructs in physics or physiology may be considered as abstract when 'abstract thinking is applied to phenomena' (Viswanathan 2010: 304). Even such a physical construct as 'battery life' ('an abstraction imposed by researchers' (Viswanathan 2010: 302)) can be considered to be abstract based on whether it is defined in a more narrow or more abstract way.

Additionally, the abovementioned Van de Ven and Ferry (1979) emphasised that lower alpha values are acceptable in some cases for three-item scales. This is in line with for instance Cortina (1993) who clearly stated that when deciding whether Cronbach's alpha value is appropriate for a particular scale, it is important to take into consideration the number of items in the scale, because it has an impact on the alpha values. Finally, the arguments for retaining the three abovementioned scales for further analysis were provided also by Nunnally (1967) who claimed that for some scales Cronbach's alpha as low as 0.5–0.6 can still be sufficient, as reported by Cretu and Brodie (2009: 309): 'A threshold value for Cronbach alpha is 0.7 for new scales or 0.8 for scales that have been previously used in research (Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), although reliability between 0.5 and 0.6 has been considered suffice by Nunnally (1967) (cited in Churchill, 1979)'.

The table below shows a description of each item, the rotated factor loading, and the coefficient alphas for each scale.

Table 4: Factor loadings and Chronbach's alphas for the scales established in the factor analysis

Scale items	Factor loadings
Team success⁸ ($\alpha=.913$)	
This is my favourite team because it usually wins games against other teams.	.809
This is my favourite team because it has won international trophies.	.923
This is my favourite team because it has won domestic trophies.	.932
Success on the pitch is what makes me consider this team as my favourite.	.841
Players/drivers ($\alpha=.682$)	
If my favourite player in the team left the team, the team would no longer be my favourite.	.735
This is my favourite team because a player from my home country plays in it.	.717
A star player is the main reason this team is my favourite.	.638
Engagement through marketing ($\alpha=.760$)	
The team makes an effort to provide attractive products (e.g. sports events, products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise, digital products).	.797
The team and the team's products are professionally promoted by the team's management.	.778
The team's marketing activities engage my attention.	.650
The team communicates well with its fans.	.627
I can easily find information about the team on the Internet.	.391
Brand identity ($\alpha=.827$)	
I know what makes my favourite team unique compared to other teams.	.610
The values of the team are one of the reasons why it is my favourite team.	.814
I identify with the aims of the team.	.843
I identify with the ethos of the team.	.870
Media (TV) exposure ($\alpha=.591$)	
I can regularly find information about the team on TV news.	.778
I can easily watch games of the team on thematic and satellite TV (non-team-branded channels).	.763
I became a fan of the team because it was often on TV.	.609
Loyalty ($\alpha=.857$)	
If I had the opportunity, I would be keen to attend a game of the team.	.642
I consider myself loyal to the team.	.729
Regardless of whether they win or lose, I will remain a fan of the team.	.949
Even if the team was unsuccessful, my loyalty towards it would not change.	.952
Advocacy ($\alpha=.806$)	
I never miss an opportunity to recommend the team to others.	.699
I would recommend the team's digital products to others.	.781
I would recommend the team's merchandise to others.	.791
Product purchase ($\alpha=.823$)	
I regularly purchase the products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise (such as clothing, bags, key rings, towels etc.).	.480
I regularly purchase the team's digital products (DVDs, mobile phone downloads, including ring tones, logos, wallpapers etc.).	.711
I regularly purchase the team's memorabilia (books, photos signed by players, original programmes etc.).	.639
I intend to purchase the team's digital products in the future.	.810

⁸ The loadings for all factors except the 'Brand favouriteness' factor were reported based on factor analysis with the oblimin rotation.

I intend to purchase the team's memorabilia in the future.	.733
Interaction ($\alpha=.634$)	
I intend to attend future games.	.573 ⁹
I regularly connect with the team via its online communication channels (website, Twitter profile, Facebook profile etc.).	.664
I regularly participate in the team's online community (through fan forums/chat rooms, online chats with players, fantasy sports etc).	.661
Media consumption ($\alpha=.722$)	
I regularly watch games of the team on TV.	.707
I regularly watch TV for news about the team.	.824
I follow news about the team (match results, live scores, information about the players/team etc.) in the daily sport pages and sport magazines.	.751
Brand favouriteness ($\alpha=.853$)	
I favour this team over other teams.	.830 ¹⁰
I seek information about the team.	.855
I enjoy conversations about the team with friends and relatives.	.790
I enjoy watching the team playing.	.878

1.2.1. Factor description

Brand favouriteness factor

The four items loading on this factor are the same as the items in the original 'brand favouriteness' scale – the values for all items were over 0.4 (i.e. 0.830, 0.855, 0.790 and 0.878) hence none of them was dropped in the process of factor analysis. The 'brand favouriteness' factor reflects the general attitude of Polish fans towards the brands of their favourite global sports teams. The conclusion that stems from the performed factor analysis is that a favourite global sports team brand is the brand of a global sports team that a fan prefers over other global teams, seeks information about it, and enjoys conversations about it and watching it play. This corresponds with the results of the first stage of this research, which revealed that a favourite global sports team brand remains particularly close to its foreign-based fans' hearts. The factor analysis demonstrated that the relationship between the surveyed Polish fans and their favourite global sports teams is truly strong, as the fans appear to live their teams' brands on a day-to-day basis, which was reflected in the items loading on this factor. The strength of the loadings showed that fans engage in the brand of their favourite global team, described as an 'overseas sweetheart' (Ben-Porat 2000), despite the fact that they are geographically separated. The surveyed Polish fans evidently make an emotional investment in the relationship with their teams that, due to the presence of the teams in fans' lives, becomes more meaningful. As the item 'I favour this team over other teams' implies, a favourite global sports team is the only global sports team with

⁹ All three loadings on the 'Interaction' factor were originally negative (-0.573, -0.664 and -0.661) and since they all showed the same direction of the relationship with the factor, the negative signs of loadings were ignored. The researcher proceeded in a similar manner to May et al. who reported reversing the negative loading signs in their study 'for ease of interpretation' (2008: 642).

¹⁰ The loadings for the 'Brand favouriteness' factor were reported based on factor analysis without the oblimin rotation.

which the surveyed Polish fans maintain such a strong bond. This is the essence of 'brand favouriteness' that in this concept there is no room for any other brand. For fans only this one favourite team brand counts and, as the available research has described it, only this one team brand occupies the top rung of the ladder of possible brand choices (Ries and Trout 2001 cited in West, Ford and Ibrahim 2015: 6–7). Even if a particular fan shows some approval for other global teams and follows their endeavours, his or her relationship with the favourite global team brand is anyway incomparably more intense and dominates in his or her everyday life.

Brand favouriteness antecedent factors

Team success. All four items loaded strongly on this factor with values of 0.809, 0.923, 0.932 and 0.841. Hence, this conceptualisation of athletic success in regard to a sports team operating in the global marketplace seems to be appropriate and relevant. This factor indicates how important the global team's sports success is for Polish fans who decide whether to support it or not. Each of the items adds a particular dimension to it. The item 'Success on the pitch is what makes me consider this team as my favourite' implies that on-the-field success may be a decisive factor for choosing a particular team as one's favourite. However, team success may be defined in various ways depending on the team's status and fans' expectations (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998). Not until one looks at the three remaining items under this factor does it become clearer how the surveyed fans understand their favourite teams' sports success. The item 'This is my favourite team because it usually wins games against other teams' indicates that success is perceived firstly as a victory in a direct confrontation with a competitor. This item could be applied to any team – regardless of whether it is a global team or a team at the bottom of the table trying to avoid relegation. Nevertheless, in combination with the two remaining items – 'This is my favourite team because it has won international trophies' and 'This is my favourite team because it has won domestic trophies' – it gives a full picture of a global team's success, which is measured with the number of trophies achieved. Interestingly, the nature of the loadings for these two last items is relatively stronger. This implies that Polish fans for whom success is such an important factor that attracts them to a particular global team, pay attention not only to the fact that their team simply wins games or races, but also to what the games' or races' stake is, where they lead the team to, and whether the team is capable of proving its long-term superiority over other teams – either domestically or internationally. A sports team is then considered to be successful if it wins in sporting competitions against other teams, in both the national and international arenas. The original 'Team success' scale consisted of five items, but one of them – 'For me style of performance is more important than the team's success' – was dropped in the process of factor analysis. This could mean that for those fans who consider a particular team as their favourite due to its athletic success, its style of performance is less important than the on-the-field results. It does not mean that they do not appreciate it at all. It just means that in the way how these fans evaluate their favourite team, a winning record predominates style of winning and that for them even the most attractive performance would not compensate the lack of athletic success.

Players/drivers. Three items loaded heavily on this factor with values of 0.735, 0.717 and 0.638. The players/athletes factor demonstrates how the individual personalities of athletes that are part of the team can affect the team as a whole. The items that loaded on the factor indicate that what matters for fans is an athlete's personality, charisma (star players/athletes), a personal, very subjective attachment to the athlete (favourite player/athlete), and finally, if a player/athlete comes from a fan's home country (i.e. Poland). Interestingly, higher loading for the item 'This is my favourite team because a player from my home country plays in it' than for the item 'A star player is the main reason this team is my favourite' may indicate that star athletes, although so desired by teams' management, for Polish sports fans are a slightly less attractive part of their favourite team than players or drivers from Poland. This may be surprising, especially in the context of the interviews with experts conducted in the first stage of this research and the literature findings, where the importance of star players for sports teams has been greatly emphasised. It may seem then that the strategy involving the use of a star athlete to grow an international fan base, so often employed by global sports teams, may not always work for Polish fans. A high loading of the item 'If my favourite player in the team left the team, the team would no longer be my favourite' demonstrates that in the case of the surveyed Polish sports fans sympathy for a player or a driver may dominate sympathy for a team. Once an athlete leaves the team, some fans may remain faithful to him to the extent that they will follow him and switch team allegiances. It should be emphasised that the favourite player is a wider term than a star player who, as discussed above, may not be the type of athlete who attracts fans to a particular global team. This may mean that for some fans a star player may be a favourite player, whereas for others stardom may not be enough to follow the player once he leaves the team if he is not their favourite. Compared to the original 'Players/athletes' scale the questionnaire item 'This is my favourite team because skilful players play an important role in it' capturing other, more objective, qualities such as skills, was left out. This should suggest that they are of secondary importance. At least they are not crucial for those fans who favoured a particular team driven by the player/driver factor.

Engagement through marketing. Most of the items loaded heavily on this factor with values of 0.797, 0.778, 0.650 and 0.627. This factor addresses the role of marketing strategy in engaging Polish fans with their favourite global sports team brands. Fans value the professionally promoted, attractive 'products' of teams such as sports events, team merchandise and digital offerings, as indicated by strong loadings for the following items: 'The team makes an effort to provide attractive products (e.g. sports events, products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise, digital products)' and 'The team and the team's products are professionally promoted by the team's management'. This also applies to the smooth communication between fans and the team, and to engaging marketing activities offered by the team to its fans – 'The team's marketing activities engage my attention' and 'The team communicates well with its fans' items. However, the same activities fail to make fans part of their favourite team, as the item referring to it ('The team's marketing activities make me feel part of the team') was dropped in the process of factor analysis. This may suggest that marketing activities of global teams have still unexploited potential to engage Polish fans with their own brands. Besides, a team's products are generally not considered to be affordable and easily accessible (i.e. fans are not

offered a wide variety of products), as the items referring to these two product characteristics were left out too. This demonstrates that while Polish fans positively evaluate the quality of their teams' products and undertaken marketing activities, they have limited access to them, often due to reasons that are beyond their influence. As a result, this decreases the opportunity for global teams to engage some of their foreign-based fans to a greater extent. The item 'I can easily find information about the team on the Internet' (originally included in the 'Media exposure' scale) with the loading of .391 may suggest the increasing importance of the Internet for initiating teams' online marketing activities addressed to their fans. Particularly in the case of overseas fans the Internet is often the only way they can be exposed to teams' marketing. However, taking into consideration a relatively weak loading for the abovementioned item compared to loadings for the other four items, it seems that sports teams using the Internet to achieve their goals should first of all focus on the content of the message they want to convey to their fans and not only on the channels through which it can be done.

Brand identity. The brand identity variable was measured by the same four items that, after the factor analysis, loaded heavily – 0.870, 0.843, 0.814 and 0.610 – on the 'Brand identity' factor. None of the items were dropped and no new item from other scales expanded the 'Brand identity' scale. This means that the original scale was appropriate to measure the brand identity concept. These items indicate that in the case of the surveyed fans a particular global sports team brand becomes their favourite often due to its attractive identity – understood as the team's uniqueness, values, ethos and aims. It is an interesting discovery as while foreign fans may be familiar with more tangible characteristics of their favourite global sports team such as on-field success or athletes being part of it, one could expect that it may not be the same for the team's brand identity. For instance, often the first thing foreign-based fans hear about the team is information about its sports achievements, whereas it seems that to know a team's brand identity well fans need more time. Therefore, this could imply that for many overseas fans brand identity may not be a key factor affecting their decision to support a particular global team. However, the strength with which the item 'I know what makes my favourite team unique compared to other teams' loaded on the factor demonstrates that Polish fans are well aware of what their team stands for compared to its competitors and what makes it distinctive. They clearly understand the values, ethos and aims of the team, they find them attractive to such an extent the team becomes their favourite and, what is often the case, they identify with them. This was reflected in strong loadings for the following items: 'I identify with the aims of the team'; 'I identify with the ethos (a set of values, norms, behaviours, beliefs) of the team' and 'The values of the team are one of the reasons why it is my favourite team'. So the surveyed Polish fans may favour one team over its competitors because they find its identity particularly attractive and the values that form this identity concurrent with their own values. As indicated in the existing research this fit between the values of the team and those of its foreign-based fans strengthens the team-fan relationship (Chanavat and Bodet 2009; Richelieu 2013).

Media (TV) exposure. Three items loaded strongly on this factor with loadings of 0.778, 0.763 and 0.609. The original scale measured media exposure as one of the antecedents of brand favouriteness.

After the factor analysis, one item referring to team's exposure online was dropped. The three remaining items that loaded on this factor referred to television as being a key mass medium that determines fans' choice of their favourite team. Therefore, as a result of the factor analysis, the variable in the brand favouriteness model primarily named 'Media exposure' was labelled the 'Media (TV) exposure' variable. The item 'I became a fan of the team because it was often on TV' indicates that some of the surveyed fans started to support their favourite global team due to its television presence. This means that for some Polish fans the impact of television exposure dominated the impact of other brand favouriteness antecedents. This is in line with the past research findings that media contribute to building team brand awareness among fans throughout the world (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). Television especially is a powerful mass medium and offered the surveyed fans the easiest access to information about their teams (news and sports event coverage), which stems from the strength with which the items 'I can regularly find information about the team on TV news' and 'I can easily watch games of the team on thematic and satellite TV (non-team-branded channels)' loaded on the factor. For foreign-based fans television is the main source of information about their favourite global sports teams and a substitute for the geographically close relationship with these teams usually experienced by domestic fans. The observation that clearly emerged after the inspection of the 'Media (TV) exposure' scale is that the items that remained after the factor analysis was performed, are mainly focused on media exposure that to a lesser extent lies within the teams' influence. They mainly concern the presence of teams on television channels other than those controlled and managed by the teams themselves. In the case of external broadcasters teams may try to impact information referring to them only through public relations activities. In the 'Media (TV) exposure' scale only the item 'I became a fan of the team because it was often on TV' concerns any television channels (including teams' own channels).

Brand favouriteness outcome factors

Loyalty. All items loaded strongly on this factor with values of 0.642, 0.729, 0.949 and 0.952. From the original 'loyalty' scale three items remained and these are: 'I consider myself loyal to the team'; 'Regardless of whether they win or lose, I will remain a fan of the team' and 'Even if the team was unsuccessful, my loyalty towards it would not change'. The values for the last two items are particularly strong measures of this factor. The scale was filled up with the item: 'If I had the opportunity, I would be keen to attend a game of the team'. All items concern the importance of fans' loyalty towards their favourite global sports team brands as one of the benefits gained by global sports teams from their international fan bases. The surveyed Polish fans are well aware of their loyalty towards their favourite global sports teams, which was implied by the strength with which the item: 'I consider myself loyal to the team' loaded on the factor. The remaining items reveal how this loyalty is manifested. Loyal fans do not change their attitude, regardless of the on-the-pitch results of their favourite team. Success or defeat does not matter for a loyal fan – he or she remains loyal and would still attend events where the favourite team participates if there was the opportunity, which was indicated by the item: 'If I had the opportunity, I would be keen to attend a game of the team'. High loyalty towards teams expressed by their fans despite a lack of athletic success is in line with the

common view in the subject literature that a sports product is consumed in an irrational way (Chadwick 2006; Barajas and Urrutia 2007): even if the team's on-the-field performance is below fans' expectations, loyal fans stay with it for good and for bad. Interestingly, the item 'If I had the opportunity, I would be keen to attend a game of the team', drawn from the 'Attendance' scale, replaced the item 'I say positive things about the team to other people' that failed to load on the 'Loyalty' factor. One possible interpretation could be that loyalty towards teams in the opinion of the surveyed fans manifests itself in fans' participation in sports competitions of their favourite teams, e.g. games or races rather than just in communicating a positive message about them to other people.

Advocacy. Three items loaded heavily on this factor with values of 0.699, 0.781 and 0.791. All of them were also included in the original four-item 'Advocacy' scale. The items under this factor show that global fans are natural sports team brand advocates. The strength with which the items 'I never miss an opportunity to recommend the team to others'; 'I would recommend the team's digital products to others' and 'I would recommend the team's merchandise to others' load on the 'Advocacy' factor demonstrated that the surveyed Polish fans are willing to recommend to others their favourite team, as well as its merchandise and digital products. Recommendation is then not limited to the actual sports team but may also concern team-related products. The fact that the surveyed Polish fans are to a large degree willing to spread the word about their favourite team brand suggests that they are active members of their teams' fandom. Such fans are particularly valuable to teams as they act as teams' brands ambassadors and may vastly contribute to recruiting new fans and growing further their teams' fan communities. As stated above the original 'Advocacy' scale consisted of four items. The fourth item: 'If friends or relatives asked me if it is worth watching a game of my favourite team, I would definitely recommend it' failed to load on this factor. A possible explanation could be that while Polish fans may not recommend their favourite team to their friends and relatives, they may do it to people from outside this group. These could either be the members of their immediate family (e.g. parents, siblings or children) or people with whom one does not have close links. In the age of new technologies development, which made possible a regular communication with people from all over the world, Polish fans may often start online conversations about their favourite teams even with hardly known individuals. As a result, these days a recommendation process takes place in the virtual reality much more frequently – through discussion forums or chats – than in a traditional way in the real world.

Product purchase. Five items loaded strongly on this factor with values of 0.480, 0.711, 0.639, 0.810 and 0.733. This factor refers to one of the consumption behaviours of Polish fans. The items that load on this factor indicate that Polish fans purchase or intend to purchase products of their favourite sports teams. These include products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise (such as clothing, bags, key rings, towels, etc.), the team's digital products (DVDs, mobile phone downloads, including ring tones, logos, wallpapers, etc.), and the team's memorabilia (books, photos signed by players, original programmes, etc.). The inspection of the values of particular item loadings on this factor would suggest that memorabilia and digital products are preferably acquired by the surveyed Polish fans;

they also declared the intention to buy these products in the future. Interestingly, less popular is merchandise, as the loading for the item 'I regularly purchase the products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise (such as clothing, bags, key rings, towels etc.)' was the lowest of all item loadings on this factor. What is more, the item referring to the intention to acquire merchandise in the future failed to load on the 'Product purchase' factor. There are a few possible explanations of these purchase preferences. The inspection of the items that loaded and failed to load on the 'Engagement through marketing' factor revealed that teams' products are in general not perceived by the surveyed fans as affordable. It is possible then that prices of merchandise are higher than of other team products and this may stop Polish fans from buying it. Furthermore, low popularity of merchandise may result from easy access to counterfeit merchandise that sports fans in Poland have. Finally, regardless of price, fans might simply value team-related memorabilia and digital products over merchandise. This could be an interesting discovery as according to the literature, from the fans' perspective merchandise plays a vital role – by displaying their favourite team's branded products fans demonstrate their relationship with this team (Cialdini et al. 1976; Donavan, Janda and Suh 2006).

Media consumption. All three items loaded heavily on the 'Media consumption' factor with values of 0.707, 0.824 and 0.751, being strong measures of this factor. The list of items that loaded on it differs from the initial list of items subjected to the factor analysis that were originally used to measure the 'Media consumption' variable. In the process of the factor analysis, all the items referring to online media were either dropped or included under another factor. The remaining items indicate that Polish fans regularly consume content concerning their favourite teams available on media – these items focus on television, newspapers and magazines as the main means through which information is obtained. The scope of required information is broad – it ranges from news items, match results, information about athletes to games' broadcasts. This does not come as a surprise, as the existing research has showed that consuming media content concerning a favourite sports team is often the most popular (or one of the most popular) consumption behaviours undertaken by foreign-based fans of global sports teams (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Menefee and Casper 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). For overseas fans media are not only a source of news about their favourite teams; by consuming team-related information they maintain and enhance the relationship with their teams, which due to currently available communications technologies are present in their everyday life. A common characteristic of these items that were retained in the final scale is the character of the communication process they captured. Through traditional media sports fans participate in one-way communication where a message is produced by a broadcaster (in the case of television) or a publisher (in the case of press), and fans are just its passive receivers in a sense that their activity is limited to receiving and consuming information. This process differs from the two-way communication through online media. As mentioned above, the items referring to online media consumption were removed from the original scale and some of them contributed to forming the 'Interaction' scale discussed below.

Interaction. Three items loaded on this factor with values of 0.573, 0.664 and 0.661. This is an entirely new factor that emerged in the process of factor analysis. Two items – ‘I regularly connect with the team via its online communication channels (website, Twitter profile, Facebook profile etc.)’ and ‘I regularly participate in the team’s online community (through fan forums/chat rooms, online chats with players, fantasy sports etc.)’ were drawn from the ‘Media consumption’ scale, as discussed above. The third item ‘I intend to attend future games’ was taken from the ‘Attendance’ scale that was omitted from the subsequent analysis, as no loadings with values over 0.3 were found that could be used to form the ‘Attendance’ factor. Based on the ‘Interaction’ factor a new variable named ‘Interaction’ was identified and was included in the subsequent analyses. The items loading on this factor show that global fans are keen to interact with their favourite global sports team brand and its fan community. The items indicate that fans do this by regularly connecting with the team via its online communication channels (website, Twitter profile, Facebook profile, etc.), and by participating in the team’s online community (through fan forums/chat rooms, online chats with players, fantasy sports, etc). They also potentially attend sports events in which their favourite team is participating. As can be seen, interaction may take place both in the real and the virtual world. However, in the case of foreign-based fans of global sports teams (i.e. the surveyed Polish fans) it mainly occurs on online platforms – through a team’s website and social media or unofficial sites managed by particularly active team’s fans. Overseas fans usually do not have many opportunities to watch live performances of their favourite teams. This conclusion is based on the relatively stronger nature of the loading for the two items referring to online interaction. The interaction assumes a mutual relationship in which the roles of both parties are similar. This can be particularly well observed in respect of the interaction through the Internet. As mentioned above this process differs much from communication via traditional media. As opposed to traditional media online media facilitate two-way communication. They allow fans not only to receive information produced by their favourite teams but also provide them with necessary tools to create their own content that can be further disseminated through the same channels. Therefore, they have become a great tool for interaction between fans and their favourite global sports team brand, and between fans themselves. The emergence of this factor is an interesting discovery, as to the researcher’s knowledge interaction was not discussed in any studies dealing with consequences of sports team brand development in the global marketplace.

Summary. The final model of the global sports team brand favouriteness that was used in further analysis consists of eleven variables, defined by 41 items. Compared to the initial brand model that was established as a result of the literature review and the first stage of data collection (i.e. interviews with brand experts), the number of variables did not change. What changed, however, is the composition of these variables’ set. Among the eleven variables there is a new variable named ‘Interaction’, while another – ‘Attendance’ – was dropped as a result of the factor analysis.

1.3. Regression analyses

The regression analyses were undertaken with the aim of testing initially formulated hypotheses, through estimating the model parameters and establishing the nature of relationships between variables in the brand favouriteness model. Separate regression analyses were conducted for the brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes. A multiple regression analysis was performed in order to determine the relationship between the global team brand favouriteness antecedents and brand favouriteness. Subsequently, a series of simple linear regressions were performed between the global team brand favouriteness and each of its outcomes. The global team brand favouriteness is the central variable in the model – it is the dependent variable in the multiple regression analysis and the independent variable in the simple linear regressions.

A standard multiple regression analysis helped to evaluate to what extent each of the independent variables (brand favouriteness antecedents) contributed to predicting the dependent variable (brand favouriteness). Moreover, regression was to provide information about the model as a whole (i.e. how much of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by the whole set of antecedent variables) (Pallant 2005). On the other hand, in a series of simple linear regressions brand favouriteness (acting this time as an independent variable) was regressed on each of its outcomes separately with the aim of establishing whether there was a linear relationship between them and – if there was a relationship – how much of the variance in a particular brand favouriteness outcome could be accounted for by brand favouriteness.

Whereas the use of regression analysis directly resulted from the abovementioned objectives of the quantitative stage of research it was also justified due to its wide application in social sciences. It is not difficult to identify management or marketing studies where multiple regression has been employed to analyse quantitative data. Wong and Merrilees (2007) used standard multiple regression analysis to establish that a firm's marketing strategy and innovation level impact its brand performance. The same technique of data analysis helped to examine the influence of various dimensions of service quality on golf club members' satisfaction with service providers and on their revisit intention (Lee et al. 2011). Pifer et al. (2015), through the use of multiple regression analyses, examined how the various star players' characteristics impacted sports team brand equity. In social sciences simple linear regression is particularly popular in political studies and sociology. Nevertheless, its use in marketing and management studies has also been substantial. Kavita and Narendra (2011) used a simple linear regression model to assess the impact of individuals' involvement with the extension category on their attitude toward brand extension. As a part of their methodology, Kim and Kim (2004) employed simple linear regression to examine the relationship between customer-based brand equity and sales in quick-service restaurants. In the study of Park, Andrew and Mahony (2008) simple linear regression helped to establish that trait curiosity is a significant predictor of novel sports spectatorship.

1.3.1. Multiple regression

As in the case of factor analysis, multiple regression analysis commenced with an assessment of the suitability of the data using regression analysis. Following Pallant's (2005) guidance it was first established that the sample size was appropriate and met the necessary requirements to perform the analysis. This is vital since a sample of the appropriate size permits the researcher to generalise from the data gathered. As indicated in Chapter III section 4.5, the sample size of 614 well exceeded the size of sample required to run regression analysis, which permitted the researcher to make generalisations based on her findings. Subsequently, the data were checked for multicollinearity, which occurs when the independent variables are strongly correlated (Pallant 2005). The table below displays the interrelationships between the antecedent variables in the multiple regression analysis. The correlation coefficients were not higher than 0.7 (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007), which suggested that the independent variables were not highly correlated. Additionally, to enhance the methodology validity further two measures were employed. The VIF (variance inflation factor) scores calculated for each variable do not exceed 10 and none of the tolerance values were less than 0.10 (Pallant 2005). Therefore, the regression model does not seriously suffer from multicollinearity.

Table 5: Correlations table

		Correlations					
		F_Brand_ favouriteness	F_Players	F_Team_ success	F_Engagement_ _through_ marketing	F_Media_ _TV_ exposure	F_Brand_ identity
Pearson Correlation	F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000	-.320	.014	.304	.105	.382
	F_Players	-.320	1.000	.267	-.135	.066	-.276
	F_Team_success	.014	.267	1.000	.131	.194	.014
	F_Engagement_ through_marketing	.304	-.135	.131	1.000	.281	.432
	F_Media_TV_exposure	.105	.066	.194	.281	1.000	.160
	F_Brand_identity	.382	-.276	.014	.432	.160	1.000
Sig. (1- tailed)	F_Brand_favouriteness	.	.000	.369	.000	.004	.000
	F_Players	.000	.	.000	.000	.051	.000
	F_Team_success	.369	.000	.	.001	.000	.369
	F_Engagement_ through_marketing	.000	.000	.001	.	.000	.000
	F_Media_TV_exposure	.004	.051	.000	.000	.	.000
	F_Brand_identity	.000	.000	.369	.000	.000	.

Further examination of the multiple regression assumptions showed that – based on the inspection of the Normal Probability Plot and the Scatterplot of the standardised residuals – the assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and independence of residuals were not met (Pallant 2005). Because of these concerns a bootstrap regression was conducted to confirm the significance (or

otherwise) of the independent variables. The reason for choosing such a solution instead of the variable transformation option (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007) is that:

transformations often reduce the complexity of the model by reducing the need for non-linear modelling, or by reducing the need for specific parameters to be estimated such as interactions or polynomial curvature. Many times such a 'complex' model may be preferred over variable transformation. In some cases, a theoretical argument can be made for such models, in which the elimination of the complexity is not only undesirable, but serves to obscure the relationship between the observation and theory (LaLonde 2012: 5).

Bootstrapping, introduced by Efron, is a general-purpose approach that can be used in the estimation of many statistics. It is based on the use of the data in a sample as a population out of which repeated samples are obtained: 'The population is to the sample as the sample is to the bootstrap samples' (Fox 2002: 2). A bootstrapping approach was employed in this work because it allowed the researcher to '[obtain] estimates of the properties of statistical estimators without making assumptions about the distribution giving rise to the data' (Harrell 2001: 87). It was vital for this work, because as mentioned above, some of the regression assumptions were not met. Chernick (2008) indicated that this ability of a bootstrapping approach to provide the freedom from restrictive assumptions and the fact that it can serve as a solution in situations when the data are skewed or when they have a heavy-tailed distribution makes it popular. Another advantage of bootstrapping is its simplicity: 'We can formulate bootstrap simulations for almost any conceivable problem' (Chernick 2008: 13). Chernick (2008: 14) suggested that this approach indeed may be safely used in many problems, since it is likely to provide a solution where 'realistic assumptions make other statistical approaches impossible...'. He recommended practitioners give careful consideration for using this approach and even consulting a statistician first. In the case of my work, bootstrap regression was not the first choice of the researcher. It was performed after it turned out that particular regression assumptions were not met and the researcher rejected the variable transformation option due to a risk of reducing the complexity of the model as mentioned above. In line with Chernick's (2008) suggestion the researcher sought the opinion of an experienced statistician. This was all the more important as the application of bootstrapping to regression problems is a reasonably recent approach (Chernick 2008). Hence, the number of studies employing it in practice is small. Nevertheless, some examples can be provided. Newcomer et al. (1999) used bootstrap regression to predict the level of use of community-based care services by people with dementia. Bootstrap multiple regression was also employed in the study by Mandy, Roughan and Skuse (2014) to test a number of predictions concerning the symptoms of oppositional defiant disorder (ODD).

Issues have been raised on some possible limitations of the bootstrap approach (e.g. Chernick 2008; Preacher and Hayes 2008; Hilmer 2010; Rochowicz 2010). These mostly concern small sample sizes and extreme values in the sample. Since the survey sample size in this work was 614 and most data were restricted to a 1–5 scale range, neither of these were a serious consideration in this project.

The following tables display the results of the bootstrap multiple regression.

Table 6: Summary of bootstrap multiple regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.471 ^a	.222	.215	.59213

ANOVA ^a					
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Sig.
1	Regression	60.697	5	12.139	.000 ^b
	Residual	213.175	608	.351	
	Total	273.873	613		

Coefficients ^a												
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.195	.204	15.648	.000	2.794	3.596					
	F_Players	-.212	.033	-6.363	.000	-.277	-.146	-.320	-.250	-.228	.842	1.188
	F_Team_success	.029	.022	1.337	.182	-.014	.072	.014	.054	.048	.882	1.133
	F_Engagement_through_marketing	.159	.044	3.643	.000	.073	.245	.304	.146	.130	.756	1.323
	F_Media_TV_exposure	.020	.025	.817	.414	-.029	.069	.105	.033	.029	.888	1.127
	F_Brand_identity	.230	.039	5.925	.000	.154	.306	.382	.234	.212	.761	1.314

a. Dependent Variable: F_Brand_favouriteness

Bootstrap for Coefficients							
Model	B	Bootstrap ^a					
		Bias	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval		
					Lower	Upper	
1	(Constant)	3.195	.014	.330	.001	2.585	3.858
	F_Players	-.212	.005	.059	.002	-.333	-.100

F_Team_success	.029	-.001	.024	.215	-.018	.076
F_Engagement_ through_marketing	.159	-.003	.074	.032	.021	.315
F_Media_TV_exposure	.020	-.001	.026	.414	-.031	.071
F_Brand_identity	.230	-.001	.053	.002	.121	.326

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

As recommended by Pallant (2005), the whole regression model was evaluated based on the R^2 value. Hair et al. (1992: 20) defined it as 'The proportion of the variance of the dependent variable about its mean that is explained by the independent, or predictor, variables'. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.215 indicates that the variables in the model explain about 21 per cent of the variability in global team brand favouriteness. The ANOVA table confirmed the statistical significance of the result (Pallant 2005). The R for the regression was significantly different from zero.

Three variables – players/drivers, brand identity and engagement through marketing – make a statistically significant unique contribution to the model, while two other variables – team success (F_Team_success) and Media (TV) exposure (F_Media_TV_exposure) – do not contribute significantly to the regression. This is supported by the absolute size of the beta coefficients. Additionally, the correlations table just examined indicates that the correlation between the team success variable and the dependent variable (brand favouriteness) was not significant.

The size and direction of the beta values for these three significant variables show that the players/drivers (F_Players) and the brand identity (F_Brand_identity) variables (beta –0.248 and 0.243 respectively) are more influential than the engagement through marketing variable (F_Engagement_through_marketing) with a beta value of 0.150. Interestingly, the direction of the beta coefficient for the players/drivers variable suggests, for fixed values of the other variables, a negative relationship between this variable and the dependent one. A negative coefficient indicates that an increase in the number of athletes (i.e. favourite athletes, star athletes and athletes from the home country of fans) that are part of a global sports team brand does not necessarily lead to the growth in popularity of this team among global fans. At the same time, marketing activities, and building and leveraging the brand identity are good antecedents of the global team brand favouriteness.

For the three regression coefficients that differ significantly from zero, 95 per cent confidence intervals were computed. They do not include zero as a possible value, confirming the significance of F_Players, F_Brand_identity and F_Engagement_through_marketing (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007).

The coefficients tables show that the regression significances are (bootstrap significance in brackets): 0.000 (0.002), 0.182 (0.215), 0.414 (0.414), 0.000 (0.032) and 0.000 (0.002). As expected, the bootstrap significance values are larger but general conclusions do not change.

The multiple regression confirmed the initially hypothesised positive relationships between two– brand identity and engagement through marketing – independent variables and brand favouriteness (H5 and H3 respectively), whereas the hypothesis assuming the positive relationship between players/drivers and brand favouriteness was partially confirmed (H1). On the other hand, the hypothesised relationships between two variables – team success and media (TV) exposure – and brand favouriteness were not supported (H2 and H4 respectively).

1.3.2. Simple linear regressions

A similar procedure of assessing the assumptions of the linear regressions (i.e. the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals) was undertaken as in the case of multiple regression discussed above. Because the assumptions were not met, a series of bootstrap simple linear regressions between the global team brand favouriteness variable (independent variable) and each of its outcomes (dependent variables) was performed. The details of this analysis can be found in Appendix 11.

R^2 for all five regressions are significantly different from zero. The biggest R^2 values were calculated for two regressions: the regression between brand favouriteness and loyalty and for the regression between brand favouriteness and interaction (0.312 and 0.120 respectively). This means that brand favouriteness as an independent variable explains more than 30 per cent of the variability in the loyalty variable, and 12 per cent of the variability in the interaction variable. Also, the beta values of the brand favouriteness variable regressed on loyalty and on interaction are higher than the beta coefficients in the regression equations with product purchase, media consumption and advocacy as dependent variables (0.558, 0.346, 0.128, 0.286, 0.228 respectively). Brand favouriteness has a positive relationship with each of these dependent variables. The values of beta coefficients equal the Pearson correlation coefficients.

The coefficient tables displayed as part of each simple linear regression analysis demonstrate that the bootstrap significances are similar to the original ones (bootstrap significance in brackets): 0.001 (0.015), 0.000 (0.001), 0.000 (0.001), 0.000 (0.001) and 0.000 (0.001). This means that the conclusions remain unchanged.

A series of simple linear regressions confirmed the initially hypothesised relationships between brand favouriteness and four dependent variables – product purchase, media consumption, loyalty and advocacy (H6, H7, H9, H10 respectively). Additionally, although it was not hypothesised earlier, a positive relationship between brand favouriteness and a new interaction variable identified in the process of factor analysis was revealed.

2. The analysis of follow-up interviews

As the results of the quantitative stage of the study revealed, relationships between three antecedent variables – **brand identity**, **players/drivers** and **engagement through marketing** – and brand favouriteness turned out to be statistically significant; the same concerned the relationships between brand favouriteness and its five outcomes: **loyalty**, **interaction**, **media consumption**, **advocacy** and **product purchase**. In the light of benefits resulting from the triangulation procedure in order to firstly verify, and secondly illuminate and add depth to the survey findings, the interviews with five Polish sports fans were conducted. Each of them participated in the previous stage of this research – they all completed the survey. This guaranteed that the interviewees were knowledgeable and offered the opportunity to learn, and, additionally, improved response consistency. The interviews revolved around fans' understanding and view of the global sports team brand favouriteness and its antecedents and outcomes identified in the survey. The analysis of confirmatory interviews is presented below.

2.1. Brand favouriteness

This reflects the general attitude of Polish fans towards the brands of their favourite global sports teams. A favourite brand is the brand of a team that a fan prefers over other teams, seeks information about it, and enjoys conversations about it and watching them playing. It is the brand a fan lives every day; it simply becomes a part of his or her life. This was illustrated by the example of a Manchester United fan who dedicates many hours per day to his favourite team and team-related issues – by watching its games on television (if only they are broadcast) but mainly by visiting various Internet websites concerning the team. As he admitted himself: 'Every day during ... too much time, I would say, I spend on my team's website'.

Very often this relationship with the favourite team brand lasts for many years (in the case of one of the interviewees, a Newcastle United fan, it has been about forty years since he started supporting his team). The example of this fan showed that the favourite sports team can often affect various aspects of a fan's life, e.g. professional work or artistic activity. Being a painter by profession, he has created pictures of all the players who have ever represented his favourite team. As he said his life and his team's recent history intertwine, between them exists convergence. He noticed that it does not come as a surprise to him because Newcastle United has been such an important part of his life for so long.

The interviewed fans emphasised an emotional relationship they have with their favourite sports teams. As a Barcelona FC fan described, his favourite team is to him like a family. He values it more than any other team and the reason is that it is so dear and close to him. Hence, when any sports fan tries to explain to someone the essence of his or her relationship with their favourite sports team, he or she has to talk about feelings. It is impossible to think of this relationship in a different way other than as of a unique type of emotional bond. No team counts as much as the favourite one, which on the whole – as one of the interviewees, a Chicago Bulls fan, noticed – cannot be logically explained. In his opinion (and this view was also shared with the Newcastle fan) fans are true owners of their favourite

team brands – as opposed to their formal owners who paid for their rights to those brands with their money. The Newcastle United fan admitted that he is sometimes put off by the decisions of the formal team's owner which – by affecting the team – also affect its fans. As he said: 'people feel they are simply treated as a sort of business', while they want neither them nor their team to be perceived in such a way.

2.2. Brand favouriteness antecedents

Three brand favouriteness antecedents were discussed during the interviews: **brand identity**, **engagement through marketing** and **players/drivers**.¹¹

2.2.1. Brand identity

The survey results showed that this is the most important brand favouriteness antecedent. The follow-up interviews also proved that in general this is a vital antecedent for all the interviewed sports fans. Three of them mentioned brand identity as being the most important factor that strongly affected their decision to support their favourite team (Ferrari F1, Newcastle United and Barcelona FC). One of these interviewees said: 'In my case, I'm interested in Barcelona's history. Because of that I'm interested in Catalan history too and the values that Barcelona FC carries with it and the values it tries to pass on'. For this fan an important component of Barcelona FC's identity is its approach to building a squad of players based on those who come from the team's youth academy. For the Newcastle United fan the team's identity is a part of the identity of the city of Newcastle and the team's values are convergent with the values that the city residents consider as important in their lives. This would not be so strange if this fan was English not Polish; still, it seems he knows very well what makes the team so unique for its fandom, as if he was a citizen of Newcastle. In his opinion, this team's identity differs from the identity of other football teams in the UK:

This team is a very strong part of this town, this community ... This is something special as far as England is concerned, as normally football stadiums are located in the suburbs. Here [in Newcastle] you've got the impression, that this is a town that is built around the stadium ... This team's identity is a part of the identity of this town's community ... There when you are on the stadium during the game you've got the impression that those eleven people who are playing on the pitch are the best of all citizens in the town.

¹¹ Before the interview data analysis one issue needs to be underlined. In the case of two of the five interviewees, the primary reason for choosing their favourite sports team brand was not directly linked to the brand; in other words, it was not because of an internal characteristic of this global sports team brand. One interviewee indicated that the crucial factor that made him support the team was rather elusive; it was a sort of belief that he developed during his childhood or later when he was a teenager, possibly getting to know his favourite team thanks to his parents. The other interviewee got familiar with the team while playing the FIFA computer game, using the global team that later became his favourite. These two factors are external factors influencing fans' attachment to the favourite sports team brand because they lie outside of the brand. Therefore, they are not the focus of this work. However, they are emphasised here, because the researcher got the impression that they are the primary reasons for which these interviewees support their favourite teams, and that they dominate over other brand-related antecedents. Nevertheless, brand identity, players/drivers and engagement through marketing are also important for these two fans.

In the opinion of this fan another important layer of Newcastle United's identity is its romanticism. It results from the fact that many times the team was close to reaching significant athletic success, but it did not manage to succeed in the end: '... the longer this lasts, the more the romanticism of this phenomenon increases and further ties people to this [team]', said the Newcastle fan. Newcastle's identity also appeals to people from outside the city. The interviewee reminded the researcher that it is one of the most popular teams in the UK – a second-choice team to those who appreciate how long the team and the city itself has been waiting for success. For this fan, who has been supporting Newcastle for forty years, the history and the identity of the team are part of his own history and identity.

The two other interviewees also agreed that brand identity is an important reason for supporting their favourite teams, although because of their personal experience, it was not a primary reason. These two fans are the fans who, as mentioned above, started to support their teams (Manchester United and Chicago Bulls) for reasons external to the brands themselves (FIFA computer game and past experience/parents' recommendation respectively). The Chicago Bulls fan said that in his opinion brand identity becomes important later when a fan is already attached to the team: 'I think that a person only after some time discovers these ideals and starts to identify with them. But first he or she needs to get them on the plate [someone must show them to him or her], I would say.' In this sense, the brand identity strengthens the fan's positive feelings towards the brand. Similarly to the Chicago Bulls fan also the fan of Manchester United appreciated the importance of identity of his team after some time, when he matured as a sports fan. He admitted that he knows the history of his favourite team and is aware of the fact that it has an image of a successful team but all this was not so important for him at the beginning.

The opinion of these two fans may suggest that especially for younger fans brand identity may not be the primary determinant of their global sports team brand favouriteness. As identity is definitely an intangible and abstract team's characteristic and fans, when they get to know a new sports team, may pay less attention to it. Therefore, it may not be the most crucial factor at least at the beginning of the fan-team relationship, which at that time often tends to be rather superficial. However, this is not a rule, as the example of the Barcelona's fan demonstrated. He was introduced to the Catalonian team's identity and encouraged to support the team by his father. This could mean that if a fan learns the identity of a particular team through another person, whom he considers to be especially credible, there is a chance that this identity would attract him or her to such an extent that the team becomes his favourite.

In the opinion of the abovementioned Manchester United fan, those fans who do not live in the UK are not able to understand this team's identity to the extent of those fans who are geographically closer to the team:

We cannot identify either with the team's home town or with the region or with ... history as we did not experience it together [with the team] earlier ... I do not really know, if we were in England ... I would understand it better, but in my situation I treat it in a different way.

This view is in opposition to the opinion of the Newcastle fan, who was convinced that he understands his favourite team's identity and identifies with all its aspects despite living far away from his favourite team. The explanation for this could be that he quite frequently travels around Europe to watch his team playing live.

2.2.2. Engagement through marketing

Marketing activities aimed at engaging fans with the brand were recognised as the least important antecedent of brand favouriteness. This finds partial confirmation in the follow-up interviews. The Ferrari F1 fan admitted that this indeed is the least important reason he supports this team. This is because of the geographical distance – marketing efforts of the team hardly reach Polish fans. The same issue was discussed in the interview with the Chicago Bulls fan. In his opinion Polish fans have almost no opportunity to watch NBA teams playing live, unless they go to the US. Besides, he felt that Chicago Bulls marketing does not engage Polish fans much as it is not tailored to them: 'Marketing activities organised by the team do not reach people in Poland because there is not enough access to a shop with the team's products. What's more, they cost a lot.' This could suggest that Polish fans are not the main team's marketing target. In the end, the basketball fan admitted that he finds more appealing those team's marketing activities that 'emphasise the brand identity or are part of the marketing strategy of the whole NBA league or ... are sort of charity events' as well as promotional overseas games played by some teams. However, he is aware that NBA teams, including his favourite one, rarely visit Europe within the scope of their promotional tours, and if they come, admission tickets to their games are probably too expensive for him. On the whole, Chicago Bulls current marketing engages this fan to a limited extent; however, he seemed to be open to potential new team-related marketing activities – if only he found them attractive.

The three other interviewees – Manchester United, Barcelona FC and Newcastle United fans – clearly stated that it was not the marketing activities of their teams that attracted them to their brands. Interestingly, two fans said that, although it was not true in their case, marketing activities may be a useful way of recruiting new fans and maintaining the interest of the current fan base. The latter opinion was expressed by the Manchester United fan, who criticised the quality of communication from his team on Facebook and other social media compared to other teams:

I know that there are teams that try and organise a lot of online events, and their organisational profiles are managed in an interesting way. Despite the fact that it is the third sports team on Facebook in terms of the number of 'Likes', its Facebook activities are limited to downloading photos or videos and that's all. So this activity is not so developed to have a positive effect ... It is worth investing in marketing as it allows [fans] to experience something slightly different than pure sport. Today a sports team is not only sport, it is a powerful brand, existing in various fields.

The example of the Newcastle United fan is an interesting one. This fan demonstrated that while marketing has not been a primary factor engaging him with his favourite team, he admitted that he has given in to its marketing systematically when he purchases new football kits (he seemed to be the most frequent purchaser of all five interviewed fans). He has been doing it despite having a few

football shirts already and although he has been aware that it is a well-thought team's strategy aimed at enhancing a tie with its fans. He appreciates the role of the team's marketing as long as it generates income to the team itself not to those who use it to build their own profits.

2.2.3. Players/drivers

The results of multiple regression revealed that the relationship between players/drivers and the global sports team brand favouriteness exists although it is negative. The interviewed fans shed light on this phenomenon to some extent. This could be summarised in a statement – less sometimes means more. Many outstanding players in a particular team do not guarantee its popularity to increase among fans. For some fans it may work in the opposite way, and may be perceived negatively. In the opinion of all the interviewed fans players or drivers need to fit the team. They 'testify to the brand and are the brand's representatives' – this is their role in a team. The problem starts when a player or a driver begins to represent first of all himself – before the team. A too distinct personality puts off and in the opinion of most interviewed fans is not beneficial for the team.

This may probably be explained by the fact that most of the interviewees think about individual players from the team in the context of this team – a collective of athletes. From their words clearly stems the primacy of a team over a player or a driver – it is the team that matters most. As the Manchester United fan said: 'The team is more important than individual players'. In the opinion of the Chicago Bulls fan players are simply employees in a team the same as employees of any other company – not only a sports one – and similarly to them need to operate according to the motto and mission of the brand they represent. This superiority of the team concept over an individual results from the appreciation for those players who are attached to the team brand and stay with it for longer. According to the Chicago Bulls fan, his favourite team:

... is lucky to have players strongly attached to the team and the brand ... This attracts fans and affects players' engagement with the team. Of all the teams in the NBA, the Chicago Bulls players are the most attached to their team brand ... they are not superstars from the beginning [when they join the team] but they simply grow there and ... work on the team brand image.

This view is similar to the view of the Barcelona fan, who linked the player concept with the team identity concept. The fact that the Catalan team has been based on the players who started their careers in the Barcelona training school has strengthened this fan's feelings for the team. Players who were raised in the team naturally resonate with its values later.

Sometimes one athlete who fits the team and who corresponds well with the team's identity by his on-the-field and off-the-field behaviour may increase the importance and popularity of the team in the eyes of fans to a larger extent than a bunch of stars. Especially if they dominate over the team's brand. The Newcastle United fan's perception of a player turned out to be most pragmatic:

An athlete is not more important than a team. The team is an idea, a concept – something more than an athlete. An athlete is good as long as he is useful for his team. In the case of my team, there is no player whose brand would dominate over the team's brand like Messi or Ronaldo do.

This interviewee did not dismiss star players totally – they would not affect his attitude towards his favourite team as long as they fit it. The example of a football player used by him demonstrated that it is possible: ‘A star personality that Newcastle had was for instance Alan Shearer, who never contradicted [the team] – his interest was the team’s interest’. This would mean that a star personality is of a secondary importance; what is crucial is that a player or a driver is truly a part of the team.

2.2.4. Summary

The interviewees discussed three global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents: brand identity, engagement through marketing and players/drivers. On the whole, the interviews confirmed the survey results. The interviewed fans indicated their teams’ brand identity as a crucial reason for which they have considered a particular global sports team as their favourite. The engagement through marketing factor turned out to be less influential, although it seems to have a potential to grow in importance if teams’ marketing activities were more tailored to the fans’ needs and possibilities. Interestingly, even these fans for whom it did not matter much, admitted that marketing efforts of global teams may work for others and may be useful in the recruitment of new fans. The interviewees also confirmed the negative relationship between players/drivers and global sports team brand favouriteness. The common opinion was that an athlete must fit his team, only then he is useful. Too many players with too distinct personalities may put off fans and in the opinion of most interviewed Polish fans are not beneficial for the team.

2.3. Brand favouriteness outcomes

Five brand favouriteness outcomes were discussed during the interviews: **brand loyalty**, **product purchase**, **media consumption** (TV, newspapers, magazines), **interaction** with the brand and its other fans and **advocacy**.

2.3.1. Loyalty

The interviews confirmed one of the survey conclusions: loyalty is the most common way of demonstrating fans’ attachment to their favourite sports team brands. It is understood as a characteristic of a true fan. All the interviewees agreed with this. The Chicago Bulls fan described loyalty as the best test of a fan of a particular team. The most extreme example of loyal support for the team is the Newcastle United fan, who has been a follower of the team since 1969 despite the fact that, as he said, ‘the team hasn’t won anything yet’. The interviewees were sceptical towards those so-called ‘fans’ who decide to follow a team that suddenly starts to be successful and who then leave when the team loses. This can be illustrated best by the words of the Chicago Bulls fan:

... regardless of the sports results of the team in a particular moment in time you support your team. If a victory of your team is what only matters for you, then you stop being a true fan ...

And here a lot depends on to what extent you are attached to the team brand, if you are loyal or not and if you are able to survive these lean years.

The Chicago Bulls fan noticed that loyalty is a particularly important quality if one is a fan of the teams in the NBA, as dynamics of rivalry in this league are intense: no team has got a monopoly on winning long-term and each team can win a league. This can be a source of hope for basketball fans but also a cause of their frustration. For NBA basketball fans it is their everyday life that they need to get used to.

The interviewees noticed that even the most successful team may suffer a defeat, which its followers simply need to survive together with it. In the opinion of the Barcelona FC fan when someone's favourite team fails to succeed on the field, he or she should not abandon it but just on the contrary – should support it even stronger. The Manchester United fan admitted that his team's previous season was far from being successful – the team did not manage to qualify for European UEFA competitions, which for a global team usually is a rule. Obviously, this did not cause the interviewee to lose heart in the team. He set his loyal attitude against motivations of those fans who took a temporary interest in Manchester United due to its sports successes but who may easily abandon it faced with non-satisfying on-the-field results: 'If someone left the team [in such a situation], my opinion about this person would be ... I would say ... a little bit more negative. I'm with the team regardless of the sports results ... I'm not that sort of fan'.

In the opinion of the Newcastle fan nowadays especially younger generations of fans are guided by easy personal benefits – they often find appealing in particular those teams that have bought their success thanks to money coming from a new investor. He explained that a secret of his stable and unchanged feelings towards his favourite global team lies in the fact that the source of his loyalty is not the team's success but its identity. This implies that fan loyalty needs to be deeply rooted and should not be based solely on transient or shallow factors.

2.3.2. Product purchase

According to the survey, this brand favouriteness outcome is the least common among Polish fans. The follow-up interviews confirmed this. All the fans buy their teams' products from time to time, although on the whole they do this rarely. Interestingly, none of the interviewed fans admitted to buying a digital product from their favourite team. If they buy anything, it is usually a sports kit (one or two owned on average), sometimes a scarf, a poster or a mug. The only exception is the Newcastle United fan, who among all those interviewed purchases team-related products most frequently. He quite regularly acquires various sorts of memorabilia; as he is interested in the history of football these are often books concerning English football, in particular Newcastle United. He also purchases sports kits of his favourite team (every year or two) – they are not from the current season, however, as these are too expensive.

Cost and access are among the reasons mentioned by the majority of the interviewees for the low level of purchases. As the Manchester United fan indicated, the prices of team-related products are too high. Polish fans find it extremely difficult to acquire products sold at prices taken from the team's home market (i.e. UK). However, most of the interviewees – regardless of the sports discipline – emphasised that having a team-related product is not crucial for them, because a true fan does not necessarily need things to demonstrate feelings towards his or her favourite team.

Ferrari F1 fan:

The least frequent is, honestly speaking, buying memorabilia, gadgets, etc. In fact I buy them from time to time, once every six months ... You don't buy it every month for instance – also because of the price of products. Let's be honest, you don't earn a lot in Poland, and there are other more important expenses than buying some sort of memorabilia. In fact you can survive without it. The most important is following the information about the team, supporting it and having a bond with it, not buying things.

FC Barcelona fan:

Buying sports kits is quite expensive here ... I've got one and this is enough ... I doubt that buying a lot of gadgets reflects whether you are a better or a worse fan.

Only two fans – of Chicago Bulls and Newcastle – agreed that wearing their teams' colours is vital, as it allows them to demonstrate how important their favourite team is in their life and how close to their hearts it is. The Chicago Bulls fan regretted he cannot afford to purchase more team-related merchandise:

I've got two kits and this is all I can afford. These are not match versions, because they would cost more I could spend. If there was such an opportunity and the match versions were a little bit cheaper, I would probably buy them, but currently ... I keep on putting it off.

The Newcastle fan – although as he said he does not need to show off his feelings towards the team – puts on the black and white Newcastle kit when he watches games live in order to identify with other fans and the team. He argued:

... if one sits in the sector of his [team's] fans it's like he forms this group. The group which [members] would like to identify with each other and be different from the one of the opposite team. And here wearing the team's shirts is as if ... we were also [a part of] this team...

2.3.3. Media consumption

This is a popular way of demonstrating the fans' attachment to the team brand. For the Barcelona FC fan it is equally important as the loyalty outcome. In general, up-to-date match results are the information all fans look for. In order to watch games, fans usually turn to television – mainly to commercial channels, because the public television only broadcasts the league fixtures and results, and post-game studio shows.

As stems from the interviews it seems that the availability of competitions on television featuring the interviewees' favourite global teams is rather low, and national Polish television channels that cover

the whole country do not respond to fans' expectations in this respect. As the Manchester United fan said: 'Polish public television or other [private] broadcast channels ... unfortunately do not focus much on sport. It is hard to squeeze much more [than is offered now] from television.' This is interesting as one could expect that fans of Manchester United, one of the truly global teams, throughout the world have easy access to the team's game broadcasts. Those fans who have better access to their team's live competitions through paid channels try not to miss any game. An extreme example of such an individual is the Newcastle United fan, who claimed that over 40 years he missed probably two matches of his team (it is worth mentioning here some of them he watched live at the Newcastle United stadium at St. James' Park). Despite some difficulties, the abovementioned Manchester United fan watches Red Devils' games every week or even more frequently.

Newspapers and magazines still prove to be good sources of information also about teams; however, very often fans read the electronic versions of foreign titles on the Internet, as some find it difficult to be up to date with information about their favourite teams based only on Polish television and press. The Manchester United fan stated that, in order to find the best information about his team, he reads articles in Polish sports daily *Przegląd sportowy* but he sometimes takes advantage of the Internet and accesses online versions of English newspapers, such as the *Daily Star* and *The Telegraph*, which offer first-hand information about the team often unpublished in the Polish press. Obtaining team-related content through foreign media may be a consequence of the fact that Polish media – due to logical reasons – focus on Polish sport. But it may well result from higher expectations of Polish fans of global sports teams who simply want to be better informed and search constantly for up-to-date news about their teams. These days new information technologies move forward to meet their needs. Two interviewees mentioned the internet as a regular source of information about their teams and for one of them it is a primary source of information, more important than TV.

2.3.4. Interaction

For most of the interviewed fans interaction was one of the reasonably popular activities linking them to their favourite teams (with the exception of the Chicago Bulls fan). The online interaction with the brand and its fans takes place on team profiles on Facebook and Twitter (to a lesser extent). As the Barcelona FC fan noticed, this leads to strengthening his relationship with the team. The interviews demonstrated that Polish fans often interact with each other not only through official team's channels but in particular through unofficial forums that connect Polish fans of various global teams. As the Manchester United fan stated, many of these unofficial websites have been available for some time now and are very popular among fans: '... some of them have prospered insofar as well that they have been operating over many, many years and have a large base of users'. Some of the interviewed fans visit them every day. It seems that they are more popular than official team social media profiles. One of the reasons could be that for some Polish followers the content these unofficial sites offer is more interesting than what is published on the official team channels. A good example here is the Manchester United fan who does not find what he wants on the team's Facebook page: 'Despite the fact that it [Manchester United] is the third sports team on Facebook in terms of the number of "Likes",

its Facebook activities are limited to downloading photos or videos and that's all.' It seems that the unofficial discussion forum of Polish fans of this team satisfies his needs much better. According to this fan, discussions that take place there are not only limited to Manchester United matters. For this fan it is important that he can talk to someone who shares his passion about other issues that go beyond football and the team. As the interviews demonstrated Polish fans are not only passive receivers of the content produced online on official or unofficial websites and do not only limit themselves to reading posts but they are also actively involved in commenting on published posts and exchanging opinions with other fans.

The interaction in the real world is less intense than online. If some of the interviewees engage with others in conversations about their favourite teams, these are usually their friends with whom they discuss the team's most recent competitions, as mentioned by the Ferrari F1 and Barcelona fans. Additionally, one fan of those five interviewed – the fan of Newcastle United – has had the opportunity to watch his team playing live quite regularly and to interact with other fans in the stadium. In his case the face-to-face interaction prevails, which is unusual for an overseas fan of a global team. It would seem that especially foreign-based fans mainly use the Internet as a platform for interacting with their team or other fans. In this respect, this fan behaviour differs from the interaction behaviour pattern of the remaining four fans and from common in the subject literature observations. It is probably due to the fact that this fan – like no other interviewed Polish fan – travels across Europe to be present at Newcastle's games. There, wearing his team's colours, he joins other Newcastle fans in order to support their team and share their opinions regarding it.

2.3.5. Advocacy

The interviews showed that the attitude towards this outcome differs among fans. Some do not undertake such attempts as they do not feel this is important (e.g. Ferrari F1 fan) but more frequently because they do not feel they may be convincing enough. Others are strong advocates of their teams among people they meet, especially their family. For the Chicago Bulls fan it is the second most important (after loyalty) consequence of his close relationship with the brand of his favourite team. He himself started to support the team because it was recommended to him by his parents. Later he recommended the team to his younger brother. In addition, he is a big advocate of the team among his friends and acquaintances:

I enthused my younger brother [with passion for the brand] and when I speak to others I always try to be perceived as a fan of this particular team and I try to stick to it – regardless of other people's opinions.

Also the Barcelona FC and Newcastle United fans either managed to recommend their favourite team to their family members or became fans of the team as a result of someone's recommendation. Quite successful in advocating his favourite team was the Newcastle fan who shared his sports passion with his close family – his wife and son. From what he said at the interview it seems that he tried to bring up his son to be a Newcastle fan almost from the moment of his birth: 'I still have such a photograph of my son taken when he was brought home from the hospital shortly after he was born ... the very first

shirt he was dressed in was a black and white striped shirt of Newcastle United'. Now his son is also a passionate fan. They watch together Newcastle's broadcast games and travel to watch the team's matches abroad. The Barcelona FC fan, on the other hand, was encouraged to support the Catalan team by his father. Now, whenever he can and he feels he is listened to he talks about it with other people. However, what is characteristic for the two abovementioned fans, when it comes to convincing other people such as friends, they usually do not try to encourage anyone to support their favourite team 'by force', unless they are asked who they support and why. In this respect the Manchester United fan is alike. He rarely recommends his team to others, as he believes they have their own preferences and their favourite sports teams – if only they are interested in sport. Instead, he prefers to familiarise other people with the team by telling them interesting facts about the team, commenting on the team's performance in the latest game, etc.

Hence, most of the interviewees who act as their teams' advocates spread the word mainly among members of their immediate family, and to a lesser degree among friends and acquaintances. They do not use online media for this purpose – at least this is not what they admitted to during the interviews. However, some of them mentioned that they participate in discussions about their teams on their official online channels such as Facebook. Evidently, they were not aware that by publishing a team-related positive comment on Facebook at the same they spread the word about their team indirectly among those of their friends who can watch their Facebook activity.

2.3.6. Summary

The interviews confirmed the survey results as far as the brand favouriteness outcomes are concerned. The fans that were interviewed most frequently demonstrate their attachment towards their favourite global team brands by simply being loyal to them. The product purchase outcome is the least popular, although all the fans occasionally buy their teams' sports kits. The three remaining outcomes – media consumption, interaction and advocacy – proved to be more or less equally popular among all five interviewees.

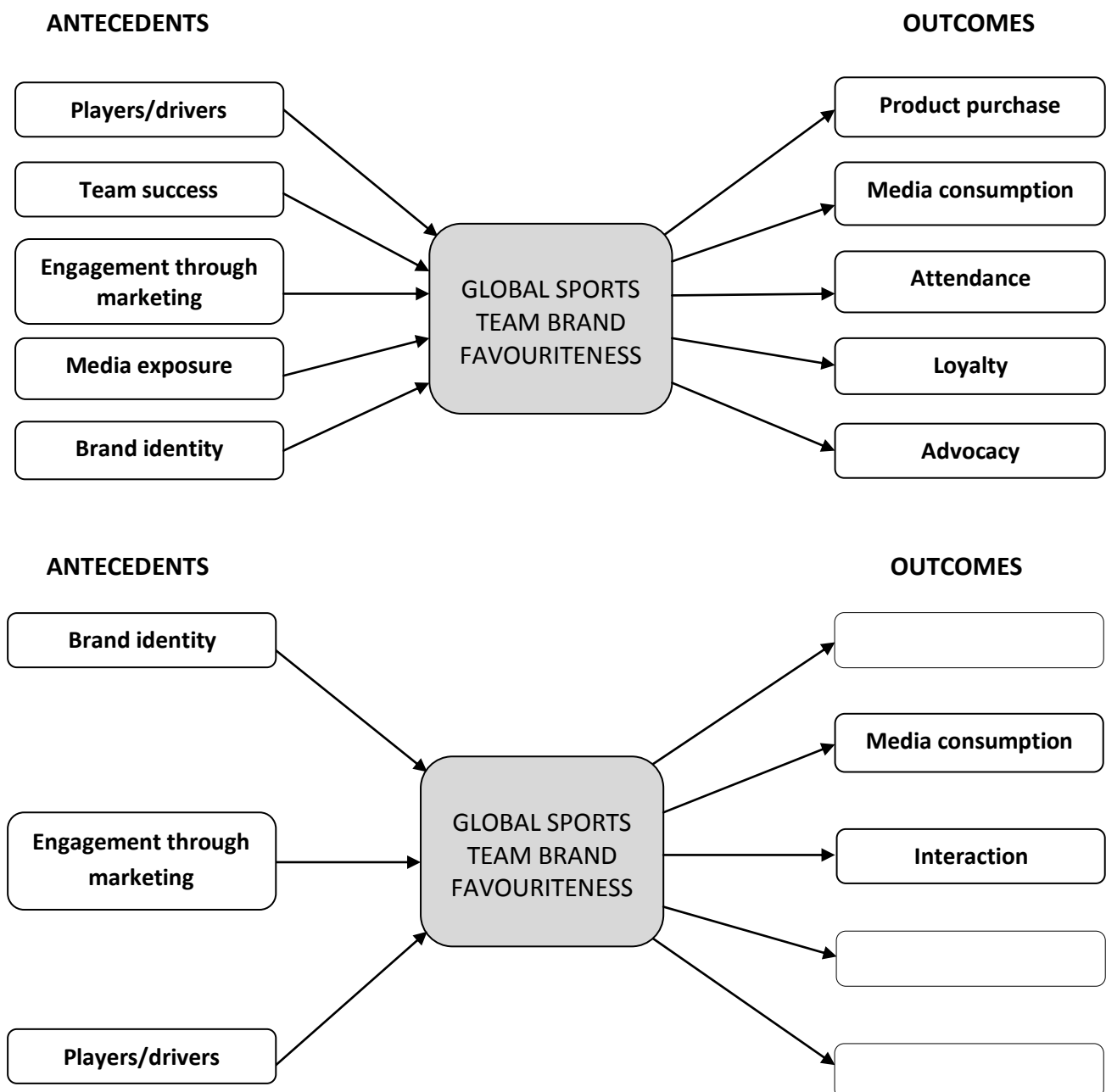
3. Interpretation of findings

3.1. Final findings

The purpose of this work was to understand the antecedents and outcomes of global sport team brand favouriteness. In other words, this study examined what attracts Polish sports fans to global sports team brands and how these fans demonstrate their support towards their favourite global sports team brands. Brand favouriteness expresses the fan's general attitude towards his or her favourite global sports team brand. The brands analysed were those of F1, NBA and football teams. The proposed model built on the basis of interviews with brand experts and literature was tested on the sample of Polish fans of global sports teams and then verified through the follow-up interviews with Polish fans.

As reported earlier, the quantitative data analysis showed that three antecedent variables – players/drivers, engagement through marketing and brand identity – have significant effects on global team brands. The other two – team success and media exposure – were included in the initial model based on the literature and interviews with experts but were dropped later in the process of multiple regression. As for the brand favouriteness outcomes, there were five variables in the initial model established in the first stage of research. The final model also includes five variables. However, in this model a new interaction variable was added as a result of factor analysis, while another variable – attendance – was left out. The two models of the brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes – initial and final – outlined below visualise the abovementioned changes.

Figure 3: The comparison of the initial and final models of global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes



Results drawn from all conducted regression analyses show that the multiple regression model of the brand favouriteness antecedents explains about 21 per cent of the variance in the brand favouriteness variable. For five simple linear regressions conducted between brand favouriteness and each of its outcomes, the biggest R^2 values were calculated for two regressions: the regression between brand favouriteness and loyalty and the regression between brand favouriteness and interaction (.312 and .120 respectively). The R^2 values computed for the three remaining regressions are lower: .016 (product purchase), .082 (media consumption) and .052 (advocacy). However, 'this does not invalidate the results of the regression analyses. It is in fact difficult to make a generalisable statement about the acceptable R^2 threshold values' (Stevens 1999 cited in Cheruiyot and Maru 2014: 165–166). It is also important to bear in mind that 'social sciences and human behaviour studies can accept as significant the values of R^2 in the range of .4-.6 and up to .2, respectively' (Rosenthal, Rosnow and Rubin 2000 cited in Cheruiyot and Maru 2014: 166). Besides, such values are consistent with the existing literature, as there are studies in which researchers based their findings on similar R^2 results (Cheruiyot and Maru 2014; Voss, Voss and Moorman 2005; Thirkell and Dau 1998). Furthermore, the R^2 values in this study mean that there are still other brand antecedents and outcomes that can be identified. Finally, the follow-up interviews with Polish fans showed that, despite the low R^2 values calculated in some simple linear regressions, Polish fans agreed with the proposed five ways of demonstrating support to favourite team brands, which confirmed the quantitative findings.

3.2. Revisions to the initial model

As stated earlier the final model differs from the initial one that was built based on the preliminary interviews with brand experts and the literature review. That model was a starting point for building the fan survey. The total number of variables in the final model decreased compared to its initial version. On the antecedent side of the model the media exposure and team success variables were dropped that led to the reduction in the number of antecedent variables in the final model to three: players/drivers, brand identity and engagement through marketing. On the other hand, the number of outcome variables remained the same. However, among these five final variables there is one brand-new variable – interaction, while one of the variables from the initial list – attendance – did not stand verification in the fan environment and was removed from the final model. A synthesis of the revisions to the initial model is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Revisions to the brand favouriteness model – results synthesis

Variable	Type of variable (Antecedent/ Outcome)	The character of change (variable added/removed from the initial model)	The reason why the variable was added/removed from the initial model
Team success	Antecedent	Removed	H 2 rejected due to the lack of a significant relationship between team success and brand favouriteness
Media exposure	Antecedent	Removed	H 4 rejected due to the lack of a significant relationship between media exposure and brand favouriteness
Attendance	Outcome	Removed	Removed as a result of factor analysis
Interaction	Outcome	Added	Added as a result of factor analysis

At first sight it can be surprising that sports success is not among the key antecedents of global sports team brands. Branding experts who were interviewed in the first stage of the data-collection process pointed to it as to a driver of sports team brands and suggested that most global sports team brands are successful on the field. However, this observation was not reflected in the results of the Polish fan survey which demonstrated that team success does not contribute significantly to predicting the dependent variable. In other words, for Polish fans on-field results of their favourite team are not a decisive factor that would affect their decision whether or not to support their team. As proved in the follow-up interviews, a popular view among Polish fans is that real fans are with their teams for good and for bad times – ‘regardless of whether they [teams] win or lose’ (quoting one of the interviewed fans). This conclusion becomes less surprising when one considers the subject literature. In general the importance of athletic success is widely recognised. It is characterised as a factor contributing to the specific character of a sports product, and affecting the brand leveraging and management. Nevertheless, it is not a primary determinant of the global sports team brand position (e.g. Hill and Vincent 2006). The athletic success helps to leverage the team brand but it is not sufficient to build brand equity (Couvellaere and Richelieu 2005). Besides, for some international fans, as demonstrated in the Bodet and Chanavat’s (2010) study of Chinese fans of EPL teams, on-the-field success may not be considered as a key factor attracting them to global teams. Winning teams are perceived as dominant and boring. On the other hand, even teams that are not successful are capable of attracting overseas fans based on their other assets. In addition to the team success variable media exposure that was a part of the initial model of sports team brand favouriteness has not been eventually included in its final version. While one of the experts interviewed in the first stage of this study claimed that a team’s on-field victory matters only if fans are informed about it, and that sports teams that receive international television coverage are on the best way to becoming global brands, the surveyed Polish fans do not perceive the role of media exposure to be a crucial factor attracting them towards their favourite teams.

As far as the outcome variables are concerned, the fact that the attendance variable has not been incorporated in the final model (although it was originally taken into consideration as one of the outcomes of global sports team brand favouriteness) provides important information. A possible

explanation could be that a focus of this study was international fans of global sports teams (specifically fans from Poland). In other words, these fans are based overseas, outside the original area of influence of those global teams. Due to this geographical distance, a natural feature of overseas fans is that in general they do not have the opportunity to watch their favourite teams performing live. This finds a confirmation in some current works on overseas fandoms of football teams showing that fans of foreign-based teams rarely travel to watch at the stadium their teams playing live (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). To sum up, in the context of this particular study the fact that the attendance variable was excluded from the model proves that it is not a common way overseas fans demonstrate their feelings towards global sports team brands.

This also leads to a conclusion that an international fan and a local fan differ from each other. By not being able to attend live sports events of their teams, international fans are not exposed to direct marketing in the stadia. For that reason, those responsible for team brand management need to treat international fans slightly differently, in terms of marketing activities addressed to them or a range of products offered to them, especially as engagement through marketing turned out to be one of key factors attracting fans to their favourite teams. At the moment, the importance of overseas fans as a target market of sports teams is often underestimated, and the priority is given to spectators present in the stadia who are treated in the marketing strategy as a key segment of the team's fans: 'Fans in the stadium are the most important group to target marketing activities to' (Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005: 510). Still, international fans are an important proportion of the overall number of fans of global sports teams and they contribute to their team's revenue significantly.

The fact that the attendance variable has not been included in the final model corresponds with the incorporation of another variable – interaction. Interaction is understood here not only in the context of a real but especially of a virtual world. Having been described in such a way this variable to some extent fills the gap in the direct fan-to-fan and fan-to-brand interaction in the stadia which international fans are unable to participate in. This was confirmed in the follow-up interviews with Polish fans who emphasised that such an interaction is an important part of their day-to-day routine centring on their favourite team, and a vital consequence of supporting their favourite teams. Engaging in online discussion forums or social media profiles of their favourite team are the most common ways how Polish fans interact with their team's brands and other fans. The interaction variable is discussed in detail below.

3.3. Final brand favouriteness antecedents

Overall, this study shows that brand identity and engagement through marketing are positively related to the brand favouriteness variable, while the players/drivers variable is negatively related to it.

Brand identity. From the point of view of fans, brand identity is a vital antecedent of brand favouriteness. The stronger the sports team brand identity, the more fans consider this team brand to be their favourite. If a team brand knows how to make itself stand out from other teams and emphasises its uniqueness, team values, aims and ethos, then it easily wins fans. The importance of

this variable was signalled in the first stage of this research – the interviews with brand experts and in the subject literature. According to some of the experts, the visual identity, players' behaviour on and off the pitch, and communication with fans can be used to pass on the team's brand identity. They noticed that sports teams often build their identity based on on-the-field success, style of performance, heritage or attractive brand story. The interviewed fans emphasised additional aspects of team brand identity. In addition to the history of the team, strong links with the team's local community and particular policies of the team management towards team building (i.e. the squad based on the athletes who started their careers in the team's training school) make the team's brand identity appealing to its fans. These findings show then that various elements of the team brand identity may attract sports fans to a global team. Some of them reflected the elements of team brand identity indicated by fans of global sports teams in other studies such as reputation/tradition including history of on-the-field success (Hill and Vincent 2006; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016), strong links with fan community (Bodet and Chanavat 2009) or team colours (Hognestad 2006). Other identity components that were emphasised in this research – players' behaviour on and off the pitch, working for local community or particular team recruitment policies – added to the abovementioned list. This shows that global sports teams may want to choose from a range of elements to build their identity on and differentiate from their competitors.

Such a high degree of importance attached by fans to their favourite sports team brand identity is interesting. It might have seemed that identity is an abstract construct that would not appeal to many overseas sports fans, as opposed to the team's local fans who are naturally familiar with it due to the team's geographic proximity, as suggested by one of the experts. Yet, the fans in the study demonstrated that they possess good knowledge of what decides the uniqueness of their favourite global team brands and they identified with their teams' values. This is in line with the recommendations of Bodet and Chanavat (2010) that sports teams in planning their international expansion strategies in the face of fierce competition on the global sports market need to rethink and adjust their marketing strategies to emphasise more what makes their brands unique compared to their opponents; even more so the marketing operations undertaken by top teams follow a similar pattern. Hence, a well-defined and coherent brand identity would be the best way to win foreign fans. The study results suggest that the appreciation for the team's identity may often be the case of mature fans who have been supporting their favourite teams for some time. For the majority of the interviewed fans it came once they learned more about their favourite global teams and then led to enhancing a bond with their team. And indeed the relationship with a sports team rooted in team brand identity has a potential to be stronger – much more than based on transient factors such as on-the-field success. This is consistent with the existing research indicating that distinct identity allows sports teams to go smoothly through times of failure (Richelieu and Pons 2006; Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008).

Engagement through marketing. The study findings also indicated that engagement through marketing is one of the antecedents of global sports team brand favouriteness. However, compared to the brand identity determinant, engagement through marketing is less influential. Therefore, it seems that the effectiveness of marketing activities in engaging fans should not be overestimated. Overseas fans are

first of all exposed to their favourite teams' marketing communication through their social media channels and websites. As the interviews showed fans visit these pages systematically, on a day-to-day basis and often spend many hours there, which intensifies their engagement and passion for the team. However, teams need to attach more importance to the content they publish online, since not all of their online activities were considered as interesting enough and diversified. Fans were disappointed that teams' initiatives such as promotional matches or CSR projects that they find particularly attractive take place too far from Poland. If such an event takes place in Poland it does attract the attention of many fans and generates significant publicity as demonstrated by the example of the Formula 1 road show in Warsaw, an event specifically addressed to Polish fans in order to popularise this sport and the competing teams.

These observations are in line with the opinion of some experts interviewed in the first stage of this research indicating that while sport teams with global aspirations seek to engage overseas fans more not many managed to fully succeed in it. To much extent this is due to the fact that some teams do not entirely recognise that fans are the same and therefore may not find their marketing communication particularly exciting and relevant. They do not communicate their brands in a way applicable to their international fan bases. Instead, they follow the communication strategies that they employ in their domestic markets. Even if a particular team develops a purpose-made strategy addressed to their overseas fans, it often fails to further recognise that overseas fans from particular territories also differ from each other. Chadwick (2007) based on the data collected from football fans from three Asian countries – Japan, China and South Korea – showed that their motives for supporting European football teams vary; hence the teams should not use the generic marketing approach to all Asian fans but respond to their diversified expectations. As the study showed they would like their teams 'to engage with them rather than keep them isolated or remote from the team or its players' (2007: 349).

Similarly Polish fans, as this study revealed, are open to their teams' promotional initiatives if only they were more accessible. Some of the interviewed Polish fans did perceive the importance of marketing for recruiting new fans and strengthening the bond between the brand and its existing fan base, although in general they do not give in to it. Therefore, it seems then that the engagement through marketing variable has got a potential to become a more influential antecedent for overseas sports fans in general and for Polish sports fans in particular – especially if the online content offered through global teams' online channels was more engaging and teams' initiatives emphasising their identity were more accessible. Taking into consideration the fact that this is the least influential determinant of professional teams' promotion, engaging fans' attention through marketing activities and communicating with fans should not be the only areas brand management teams focus on in their endeavours to build global team brands. Nevertheless, they cannot be neglected, as fans are careful observers of various aspects of team brand activities (Bodet and Chanavat 2010) and easily notice when the communication between the brand and its fans lacks good ideas and flair.

Players/drivers. Interestingly, the final study's results suggest that the increase in the number of specific types of players/drivers in a global sports team – i.e. an athlete from Poland who is employed by a global team with the purpose of growing the Polish fan base, or a star player – does not attract

Polish fans more to this team brand. On the contrary – it turned out that there is a negative relationship between the players/drivers factor and global team brand favouriteness. In practice this means that an athlete of Polish nationality or a star personality being a part of a global team, may put Polish fans off their favourite global team brand.

Yet many global sports teams incorporate certain types of players or drivers who they perceive as particularly marketable into their expansion strategies in order to attract overseas fans from a particular territory. The majority of existing literature has indicated that star players or players from the territory a particular global team targets can attract fans. However, even some of those studies have shown that there are fans who indeed might be put off supporting a particular foreign-based team by some players. As demonstrated by Hognestad (2006) and Kerr and Emery (2016) while in general in the opinion of many Scandinavian fans of the EPL teams players from their home countries signed by their English team are an important factor attracting them to it, but for some of them the influx of native players negatively affected the relationship with the team, 'which indicates that for a substantial proportion of the [fans] the national identity of a player ... represents an undesired aspect of the game in England' (Hognestad 2006: 455). Some Scandinavian fans of Liverpool who participated in the Kerr and Emery's study 'saw fellow countrymen at Anfield as an embarrassment' (2016: 518). Chanavat and Bodet (2009) and Bodet and Chanavat (2010) showed that for the majority of French and Chinese fans of the 'Big Four' English teams, football star players or players from their countries are a positive feature they associate with those teams; however, it was not a rule. Some Chinese fans were critical towards players from China signed by English teams – they claimed that a player's nationality did not matter if he did not manage to secure a place in the first team squad. Even an athlete with star personality was not an asset to some French and Chinese fans since they found unacceptable a star player in the team if his image did not match the image of the team. Finally, as Kerr and Gladden (2008: 57) suggested, some fans are disapproving of so-called 'vagabond players' who tend to switch their teams frequently.

As Chanavat and Bodet (2009) indicated, global sports teams in their internationalisation strategies often rely on the popularity of athletes. Yet, this study's results supported with the abovementioned examples mean that recruiting a star player/driver or a native player/driver to a team may not be the best way to attract some groups of overseas fans. For many Polish fans such a strategy may simply not be appropriate. Unless this athlete – whether a star player/driver or a Polish player/driver – fits a particular global team he represents, unless he feels a part of it, as one of its cogs. Athletes should be useful for their team, represent the brand, and their behaviour should be in line with the team's values and identity. Once they start dominating the team and become more a type of athlete-individual than ones of its elements acting towards a common goal, this leads to a discouragement of Polish fans to their favourite teams. It is probably due to the fact that fans perceive the operations of such teams as incoherent. One could ask to what extent such a specific role the players/drivers factor is a matter of a peculiarity of Polish sports fans of global teams. As the abovementioned examples of the studies showed, this phenomenon concerns other groups of overseas fans too; however, it seems that among Polish fans it is more common or developed on a wider scale. The explanation could be the superiority

of the team over the individual athlete concept evident in the confirmatory interviews with fans. A player/driver's stardom or nationality is of secondary importance then – what first of all counts is his utility for the team.

To sum up, it could be said that in the opinion of Polish fans a player needs to be a part of the team – first and foremost. It could be even said that he is not a player-individual but a cog in a smoothly operating mechanism. If his personality is too strong or he simply does not fit the team, his role as a part of a team is questioned. In such a situation he does not have a positive impact on the team. When the number of such players who simply do not fit the team increases, such a team is not well received by its fans and this may lead to loss of fans.

3.4. Final brand favouriteness outcomes

The study revealed that brand favouriteness leads to particular consequences: loyalty, interaction, media consumption, advocacy and product purchase.

Loyalty. The study indicates that loyalty is the most common way for fans to demonstrate attachment to their favourite sports team brands. Loyalty is a feature of a true fan, who supports the team whether it wins or loses. It should not matter for a fan how long he or she needs to wait for the success of the team – he or she stays with the team through good and bad. The importance of this variable as an outcome of global sports team brand favouriteness was not evident at the beginning of this research. Loyalty was hardly discussed at the interviews but it was included among the brand favouriteness outcomes due to its importance generally recognised in the literature. It was not until the quantitative stage of research when it became clear that in the eyes of fans loyalty is the most frequently occurring of all the brand favouriteness outcomes. This finding confirms that overseas fans express high levels of loyalty that might not be expected from them (Kerr and Emery 2011; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011). Loyal attitude and behaviour is typically associated with teams' local fans living within the geographic proximity of the team. Yet overseas fans may be loyal towards their favourite global sports team as much as its local fans (Bridgewater 2010; Kerr and Emery 2011; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011). Taking into consideration that foreign fans usually do not have the opportunity to watch their favourite teams live at the sports venues and usually maintain a contact with it through media – overseas fans' strong relationship with their favourite global team brand is admirable. Indeed, the fans examined in this study are mainly virtual fans who use media as the main source of up-to-date information about their teams. This does not stop them, however, from remaining loyal towards their teams sometimes for many years. They demonstrated their scepticism towards 'fair-weather' fans supporting some global teams only due to teams' current athletic success and popularity. While on-the-field failures, which are natural for a sports product, put those transient fans off the teams, at the same time they motivate the loyal fans in this study to even stronger support. True overseas fans stay with their team for good and for bad – regardless of whether it wins or loses, which proves that there is an element of irrationality in fans' support for sports teams (Chadwick 2006; Barajas and Urrutia 2007), in particular for those foreign based. If being loyal is a sign of a fan's strong relationship with his or her team, overseas fans usually pass this examination.

Product purchase. At the other end of the list of brand favouriteness outcomes there is team-related product purchase. Polish fans usually purchase memorabilia and digital products and to a lesser extent merchandise. In the interviews most fans declared having on average one sports kit of their favourite team; however, very often they cannot afford its match version. It seems that they are not as frequent purchasers as for instance Scandinavian fans whose majority declared purchasing their team's merchandise at least once a season (Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016).

While the final study results demonstrate that team-related product purchase is the least common brand favouriteness outcome, brand experts interviewed in the first stage of research highlighted it as one of the most common fan consumption behaviours linked to their favourite teams. However, not all of the experts fully agreed and these minority opinions have become clear in light of the final findings. One of the experts noticed that global sports teams to monetise their international fans need to adapt prices of their products to the financial capability of their global fans. The same was clearly articulated by the interviewed fans: team-related products are too expensive compared with fans' income; therefore fans buy them less frequently than they would like. Additionally, some fans do not perceive it necessary to manifest their allegiances to teams through purchasing merchandise. This is an interesting discovery as the prevailing view in the literature is that fans display merchandise of their favourite team to demonstrate their relationship with it (e.g. Cialdini et al. 1976; Donovan, Janda and Suh 2006). The fans in the study argued, however, that after all true fans do not need things to show how important their favourite teams are for them. A similar view has appeared in the subject literature – Dionísio, Leal and Moutinho (2008) suggested that especially core fans may negatively perceive merchandising sales as for them such consumption behaviours are in conflict with the values of sport. However, in this study such an attitude to teams' merchandise was not a rule since some fans did admit they would be willing to purchase their team's shirt if it was not for its price that turned out to be the crucial barrier for fans stopping them from more intense product purchase behaviour. However, product purchase has a potential to become more popular, if only fans can afford it.

Interaction. The three remaining outcomes – interaction, brand advocacy and media consumption – were more or less to the same degree observable among Polish fans, with an emphasis on the interaction that turned out to be a more common behaviour than the two others as indicated by the regression results and confirmed during the interviews with fans. Interaction is a new variable compared to the initial model derived on the basis of the literature and interviews with experts in branding. The emergence of the interaction outcome is an interesting finding, since to the researcher's knowledge it was not discussed in almost any of the studies dealing with consequences of sports team brand development in the global marketplace. The exception are the works of Kerr and Emery (2011, 2016) and Kerr, Smith and Anderson (2011) who among consumption behaviours undertaken by overseas fans of Liverpool and Ajax listed visiting official and unofficial Liverpool websites and getting together with other fans in pubs or homes to watch their teams' games.

The interaction variable covers the social interaction of fans with the brand and with other fans in the real world and in the virtual world (through social media and online brand communities). The existing

research has demonstrated that due to the interaction opportunities overseas fans of global teams do not feel isolated from their favourite teams and from fellow fans and receive similar psychological benefits to those who live within the teams' geographic proximity (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011). International fans who are dispersed over large territories much more frequently interact online than in the real world. The latter usually comes down to contacting family members or friends. It is simply not realistic for most fans of global teams to attend the teams' live performances at the stadia where the face-to-face interaction naturally occurs. However, social interaction is at the centre of fans' sports experience and not only sports venues can facilitate it.

The teams' official and unofficial online channels provide a platform for the virtual interaction. Fans in this study regularly visit their teams' websites and social media profiles (sometimes they spend many hours there every day) in order to observe published posts, actively comment on them and exchange opinions with other fans. The main platforms of interaction with other members of a team brand community are unofficial discussion forums or chat rooms of global sports teams managed by fans themselves. Some of the Polish discussion forums have operated for many years and have attracted a large numbers of fans. They have become hubs linking people who share the same passion, who can talk to each other about their favourite global team and even about issues that go beyond sport and the team. In this way fans can live their team brand on a day-to-day basis and, although it is geographically distant, make it an important part of their lives. Hence, it is evident that the interaction is about the bond with the whole brand community (including like-minded fans from all over the world) whose members connect with each other and socialise through their favourite team brands (Richelieu and Boulaire 2005). Overseas fans gather around the brand as they would do in the real world, at the sports venue. If it was not for the latest developments in information technology that bring people from all over the world together, the opportunities for many overseas fans of global teams to connect with the brand and other fans would be much more limited, and often even impossible. The frequent interaction with the team brand and its community enhances their relationship with the brand.

Media consumption. Media consumption turned out to be a reasonably popular behaviour undertaken by sports team fans in this study towards their favourite global sports teams. The more fans perceive the team as their favourite, the more time they spend on searching and consuming team-related information through various traditional media channels (i.e. television and the press). The study reveals that in most cases fans watch games of their favourite teams on television and look for up-to-date match results there. The press is still considered as a good source of team-related information. Fans read magazines and newspapers to obtain additional information about their favourite teams; very often they read the electronic versions on the Internet to find the latest news and stories; finally, they search foreign titles online for the first-hand information that they may not find in the Polish media. This indicates that nowadays overseas fans choose from a large number of sources of information those that provide them not only the most recent but also comprehensive news about their teams.

The popularity of media consumption behaviour does not come as a surprise as for foreign-based fans media are often the only source of information about their teams. The existing research has demonstrated that media consumption is one of the consequences of the sports team brand development on the global market (Kerr and Gladden 2008). In the situation when overseas fans hardly have the opportunity to watch their favourite teams live at the stadia, they 'attend' their matches through media instead (Westerbeek and Smith 2003; Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006; Bolle 2016). Being up-to-date with the latest news about the team, watching games or interviews with team members allows fans to maintain the relationship with their favourite team brands, which despite the absence of their team's geographic proximity and thanks to television and the press are present in their everyday life.

In this study this outcome variable concerns traditional media. The questionnaire items referring to accessing online media content as a result of the factor analysis were included under the abovementioned interaction variable that emerged in this process. The beta value calculated for the interaction variable is higher than for media consumption. This could mean that both types of media – online and offline – are popular among overseas fans but in some cases fans are more likely to visit for instance the team's website to look for news about the team than to watch its game on television (a similar conclusion stems from the Kerr, Smith and Anderson's study (2011) of overseas fans of Ajax). This may result from the fact that, as the interviews with fans revealed, not all fans can easily access live television coverage of games of their favourite global teams. In this study fans of most global teams in order to watch their matches on television need to turn to paid channels.

Advocacy. This study's findings show that brand advocacy is another way of demonstrating fans' support for their favourite global teams. The popularity of this behaviour is comparable to the popularity of media consumption. In the subject literature advocacy has not been identified as a consequence of the development of a team brand in the global marketplace, although some authors emphasised the role of personal recommendation in recruiting new fans. Across the whole study a picture of advocacy as one of the significant brand favouriteness outcomes emerged. It was first signalled in the interviews with experts, became evident in the survey and confirmed by the fans in the interviews.

The study revealed that fans first of all recommend the team and its products to their immediate family members, while they are rather reluctant to do it with their friends or further relatives. While advocating their favourite brands to people such as a brother, a wife or a son they are really effective, because, as it stemmed from the examples provided during the confirmatory interviews, the members of their immediate families shared their sports passion with them. Those who recommended the team brand to others often admitted that someone's recommendation had contributed to their choice of favourite global team, which proves that a personal recommendation is a powerful tool, especially if undertaken by one's parent or sibling. This observation is in line with existing research that suggested that recommendation made by members of a family is highly effective as these people are perceived as credible and influential (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006).

Fans in this study less frequently recommend their favourite global teams to their friends or further relatives, which may be determined by the fact that they respect others' right to make their own choices. Instead of trying to convince them to support, fans simply share positive information about their favourite teams and their products. Besides, while engaging in conversations about sport some of them make it clear what team they support.

In the online space fans participate in discussions through teams' social media channels or unofficial discussion forums where they follow the face-to-face patterns of recommending teams to others. Hence, a recommendation usually comes down to a conversation about the team, sharing information about it by publishing feedback or comments about the latest match results, on-the-field style of performance, etc.

3.5. Benefits for the teams

Each of the above consequences of global sports team brand favouriteness results in particular outcomes of having a strong brand for those global sports teams. They are now discussed below.

Benefits of loyalty. Overseas fans expressing high levels of loyalty are extremely valuable for global sports teams. Brand loyalty is one of the subjectively measured team brand success criteria (Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt 2005). Global sports team brands, being a focus of this study, as the conducted survey showed, have highly loyal fans in Poland, whose support, as the subsequent confirmatory interviews demonstrated, remain unchanged regardless of their teams' sports results. This is due to the fact that especially strong global sports brands are able to establish and maintain a strong relationship with their loyal fans. Support of most fans in the study is not based on transient or shallow factors such as current on-the-field success. Instead it is deeply rooted, for instance in the teams' identity, hence is more stable. Loyalty manifested mentally (Mahony, Madrigal and Howard 2000) is only a starting point for the teams since they can further capitalise on it. A strong and loyal fan base is a vital benefit for the team and a useful asset that is often used in the team's negotiations with potential sponsors and broadcasters. Therefore, it indirectly generates revenue for the team. As the number of overseas fans of global teams usually exceeds the number of their domestic fans, the profits they provide are correspondingly greater. While it is more expensive to attract a new fan than to retain the existing one, loyal fan bases that some global teams have in Poland possess a potential to generate further benefits for these global team brands.

Benefits of product purchase. Product purchase is in general perceived as one important source of revenue for the teams. This work demonstrated that in the Polish fan environment teams' own products can provide considerable income too. A common view in the literature (and among the experts interviewed at the beginning of this research) is that international fans provide particularly significant commercial benefits to their teams and that therefore it is worth investing in the development of distribution networks and increasing online product offering. Team-related products are the best way to capitalise fully on international fans as more than local fans they look to establish a

meaningful bond with their teams, and hence they spend more money on their products. This study shows that most of the revenue is obtained from the sale of memorabilia and digital products. A significant popularity of digital products signals the trend that has appeared with the development of the latest technologies. These changes have created great opportunities for global teams to monetise overseas fans' support. A considerable interest in team-related memorabilia is logical in the context of foreign-based fans of global teams. They need DVDs and books to develop their knowledge of their favourite team probably more than domestic fans who have grown up within the geographic proximity of the team. What is important is that fans in this study did not only admit to acquiring the abovementioned products but also intended to purchase them in the future. This means that the contribution of memorabilia and digital products to the global teams' revenues generated in the Polish market should remain significant.

Global teams generate less money through merchandise sales due to a lower popularity of this group of products among Polish fans mainly resulting, as was mentioned above, from their high prices. However, the researcher believes that these profits could be greater just as in the case of other international markets. To some degree much depends on the teams themselves; whether they tailor their offering – including their pricing policy – to the expectations and needs of overseas fans and to a specific character of particular markets. Only then will overseas fans be more eager to purchase merchandise. More affordable prices could also contribute to solving a counterfeiting problem widespread in some territories. As suggested by one of the interviewed experts if it was not because of this, teams' income generated internationally from branded product sales could be higher. If a sports fan can choose between an original team's shirt and a counterfeit one at a price of five per cent of the original value, he or she usually decides for the less expensive option. Lower prices set by global teams could, however, encourage more fans to purchase the original products. *This is all the more important* as product purchase behaviour is not only limited to commercial benefits. This is also a way of strengthening global teams' relationship with their overseas fans – those who acquire team-related products further associate themselves with the teams' brands. Additionally, the sale of merchandising is linked to team brand promotion – by displaying teams' colours foreign fans enhance the teams' brand awareness.

Benefits of media consumption. The consumption of team-related content available on television and in the press is also a source of commercial benefits for global sports teams. According to the existing research, especially their overseas fans contribute to the revenue generation. This is due to the fact that the number of foreign fans of the top teams exceeds the number of their domestic fans. Besides, as demonstrated in this study international fans are very concerned with following their favourite teams on media. They do it regularly as for them it is the best, and often the only, way they can sustain their relationship with their teams. Overseas fans, often despite significant subscription costs, are willing to pay for the access to their teams' game broadcasts on paid television channels. When teams possess a considerable fan base in particular territories, broadcasters are willing to sign lucrative contracts with them (or with the leagues representing them) for the right to televise their matches. As clearly stated

during the interviews with the experts fans interest drives the sales of press titles and media rights deals. If it was not for their interest in a particular team, media would not be interested in it too. Usually games and races of the most popular global teams attract international fans and subsequently sponsors and advertisers. In some countries global teams receive more favourable broadcasting rights packages from television networks since they offer better returns on investment to television companies (Charumbira 2016: 15).

However, the benefits gained by global teams from the millions of fans following them on media worldwide are also indirect. As stated above the interviewed fans admitted that consuming media content serves well maintaining a strong relationship with the teams, which is beneficial for both parties – the team and the fans. Media – television and the press – intensify and refresh this relationship, which may result in other beneficial fan behaviours. If to follow Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt's (2005) reasoning that the stadium attendance influences all other products offered by the team, 'attendance' through the media may potentially lead to similar benefits.

Benefits of interaction. Those online channels that facilitate interaction between fans themselves and with the team brand play a role similar to traditional media. As was mentioned, in the case of overseas fans, like those in the study, the intense interaction takes place mainly on online media platforms. Fans interaction within the sports team brand community is beneficial from the perspective of those managing these brands as it may become crucial to encouraging continued participation (Green 2001; Green and Chalip 1998). A contemporary postmodern sports product in its complexity provides a perfect platform for social interaction and connecting with others through brands (Richelieu and Boulaire 2005; Richelieu 2013). Sports teams that understand this mechanism are able to capitalise on the emotional attachment of their fans long term and protect themselves against the consequences of the field failures unavoidable in professional sport. Teams can facilitate the process by creating spaces where overseas fans can virtually interact with the brand and with each other and share their sports passion. Such virtual platforms as team profiles on Facebook and Twitter, the team's website or unofficial discussion forums administered by fans themselves and independent from the teams play a role of so-called 'third place', a place of informal meetings between fans (Kerr and Emery 2016). Sports teams can easily control their official channels and use them to enhance fans' involvement with the brands, and monitor the conversations taking place on some of the most popular discussion forums. It is crucial as while the online fan interaction may lead to teams' benefits it may also pose a challenge to those managing sports brands. In one sense it brings valuable benefits to sports team brands but if online conversations are not monitored and managed by the brand potentially negative views about the brand may be missed. Several studies on brand communities proved that while the relationship between the brand and its community members positively affects brand trust, the relationship of the community members to each other may have an opposite influence: 'social media negative posts or comments have five times the effect of positive ones (Corstjens & Umblijs, 2012; Powers et al., 2012)' (Habibi, Laroche and Richard 2014: 159). Team brands engaging in the interaction with their fan base have a better chance to overcome possible negative opinions about them. Unfortunately, from the data identified across all stages of this research comes a conclusion that

the team brand's interaction with its fans is often neglected by brand management and only some of the analysed teams are aware of their potential and know how to benefit from it.

Benefits of advocacy. Finally, advocacy is considered as highly beneficial for teams' fan behaviour. Fans acting as team brand ambassadors may bring new fans to their favourite teams – as demonstrated in this study they effectively recruit new fans through the face-to-face recommendation in the nearest environment (i.e. families). It seems that this pro-team behaviour results from their passion and that loyal fans are particularly successful in recommending the team to others. Once the relationship with the team gets stronger and loyalty increases, it becomes more possible that fans turn into effective team brand ambassadors (Richelieu 2013).

Such brand ambassadors, especially active and passionate fans, are invaluable in spreading the word about the team especially to those indecisive, transient fans, who may be interested in the team temporarily, due to reasons such as the team's popularity, athletic success, etc. However, they may drift away as quickly as they came if they are not influenced by an active fan of the team who conveys positive information about it. The online forums where the fans in the study meet are likely to be a place of such encounters. It is clear then that brand advocacy behaviour contributes to the process of building strong brand communities (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006; Dwyer, Greenhalgh and LeCrom 2015) and overseas fans demonstrating significant online activity may be particularly helpful in this process. Some teams which are aware of the benefits resulting from this informal recommendation get in touch with the most active fans and encourage them to share information about the team with other individuals (Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006).

3.6. How does the special nature of sports team brands influence their global appeal?

The observations from the subject literature have shown that undoubtedly sports products in their nature are distinct from non-sports products. The same applies to sports brands as opposed to non-sports brands.

However, to what extent does this distinctiveness of sports brands contribute to their global appeal and facilitate the process of brand growth? Among the final set of antecedents of favourite global sports brands identified in the data collected in this research – brand identity, players/drivers and engagement through marketing – only the players/drivers antecedent could be described as directly resulting from the distinct character of sports brands.

Based on the data collected the player/driver variable may be considered as a typical 'sports' variable. Its special character results from the fact that it is difficult to indicate an analogous 'human factor' that would contribute in a similar way to the position of non-sports brands as a player/driver factor does in respect to global sports team brands.

Athletes in the sports team cannot be treated like any employees of other companies (although formally they are indeed employed by the teams' management). The unique character of

players/drivers results from, as demonstrated in this study, the way they are perceived: either as star players/drivers or native players/drivers gaining the attention of fans from their home country. Athletes displaying such characteristics contribute to the global appeal of sports team brands in a particular way: as this work proved, the accumulation of such personalities in one team negatively impacts the way this team is received by its global fans.

Star athletes could be compared to a celebrity, so to a type of individual typical for the entertainment business. There must be something in this comparison, as sports and cinema celebrities are the most commonly selected endorsers for various brands (Upadhyay and Singh 2010). And this could be the reason why such athletes put off fans from global sports teams: they are more individuals than team players. As one of the interviewed fans stated, he did not mind a star player in his favourite football team if only his star personality did not interfere with being a part of the team. Similarly, a native player first of all needs to prove his utility for the team. The recruitment of athletes based only on their nationality or star appeal without taking into consideration their ability to become an integral part of the global team does not affect the team brand positively – on the contrary – it puts off fans. This could imply then that a player's or a driver's inherent characteristics not evident in the case of non-sports team brand employees are negatively perceived by fans of global sports teams. As a result, the teams' recruitment policy turns out to be inappropriate and does not bring expected positive results.

It seems that fans in this study definitely prefer when athletes fit into their favourite team and are its representatives – simply its employees who operate according to the motto and mission of their team brand. Then their star personality or country of origin is not important as it is subordinated to the team. Yet the athlete construct is multifaceted (Pifer et al. 2015) and consists of various layers: his contribution to the team (important also in employees of non-sports entities) but also such characteristics as celebrity status or particular nationality (used as an element of a sports team marketing strategy that paradoxically does not necessarily attract fans to the team). Hence, the complexity of a player or a driver as a team member is unique to sports team brands and not observable in the case of employees of any other types of business.

Two other brand favouriteness antecedents – brand identity and engagement through marketing – can be identified in regard to any brands, equally sports and non-sports. Brand identity is the most influential determinant of all three and engagement through marketing is the third factor that contributes to this model. In this situation, the specific nature of global sports brands – which in the final model directly results from the players/drivers antecedent – only partly decides whether or not a team brand becomes global.

Nevertheless, such a conclusion is true only to some extent. If one looks at brand identity and engagement through marketing it could be argued that although in general – in the case of sports and non-sports brands – they are the same constructs, they should be tailored, however, to reflect the specific character of a particular brand (i.e. the specific character of a sports brand). Hence, those two factors can be understood at both generic and sports levels. The central idea remains the same – using a brand uniqueness, ethos, aims and values, and communicating them to a brand's fandom

using various forms of marketing in order to engage fans. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the process of building brand identity its different aspects may be emphasised by sports brands compared to non-sports brands. It is also evident that sports brands may try to engage their fans in a slightly different way than other brands would do.

By their nature, sports brands have a certain advantage over non-sports brands. This was highlighted by a couple of brand experts in the initial series of interviews. One of them, the marketing director of the football team, claimed that the aim of non-sports brands is to build a very emotional connection with those who purchase them – similar to the one that exists between a sports brand and its fans and which results from the specific nature of a sports brand:

I guess what we [sports brands] differentiate ourselves, which other brands crave, is that emotional connection. I think every brand wants to have a more intangible relationship with their products' purchasers – that emotional side of things. But that's almost the starting point for us. We start with that emotional connection, whereas other brands would have to develop that.

Such an emotional bond is a part of the nature of sports brands and their inherent feature, while other brands must work hard to reach the same level and still they are not always able to achieve it.

To conclude, on the one hand, some of the assets sports team brands have at their disposal are similar to those of other, non-sports brands and sports teams can base on them the process of building their position internationally and even globally. On the other hand however, this work confirms one more time that sports brands are special and from their special nature result challenges faced by those who manage them but also opportunities arising.

3.7. Polish fans versus other foreign-based fans of global sports teams

Due to a limited number of available studies focusing on overseas fans of international sports teams it is hard to say unambiguously how they compare with Polish fans examined in this study.

It is particularly difficult to compare the factors that motivate fans for support since they are really varied. The overall picture of the reasons why fans feel attracted towards global sports team brands is not entirely clear – it is impossible to indicate two groups of fans who would support their teams for the same reasons. Two out of the three factors attracting Polish fans to global sports teams appeared among the top three motives identified in other studies. These are players/drivers and identity (the identity antecedent was as important as the presence of the team on media which – in this work labelled as 'Media exposure' – turned out to be an insignificant variable). The third antecedent identified in this work – engagement through marketing linked to the impact team marketing activities have on sports fans – was discussed in the fan literature less frequently. Interestingly the level of its popularity among foreign fans is comparable with that of the team on-the-field success (dropped in the process of multiple regression).

As in the case of Polish fans, Identity mattered also for overseas fans of Ajax and Liverpool football teams (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). It seems that Polish fans in this aspect remind international fans of the Dutch team who indicated reputation/tradition (covering team's style of play, history of success and ethical behaviour) as the main reason for their identification with the team. For the overseas fans of Liverpool one element of the team's reputation/tradition – style of performance – was particularly important and was included among the top three antecedents in the team identification. In turn marketing and business performance was an important element of the perceptions of Chinese and French fans of EPL football teams (Chanavat and Bodet 2009; Bodet and Chanavat 2010). Marketing, perceived as a 'strong factor of success' (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 63), was for French and Chinese fans, the same as for Polish, the criterion through which they evaluated international sports team brands.

The factor discussed in most works was players and their impact on overseas fan support for sports teams. The majority of the fans in various studies rated this antecedent of support high and evaluated it positively. In this sense Polish fans may seem to differ from satellite fans from other countries – too many star athletes or native players in the squad may put Polish fans in the study off the team brand. This resulted from a common among Polish fans understanding of the team as an overriding concept compared to an individual player. However, if one looks deeper it seems that this perception of a player was not unique. As emphasised earlier, in some groups of fans – Chinese, French or Scandinavian – the attitude to athletes within the team was similar: the fact of possessing a star personality or coming from fans' home country was not enough for a player to attract the fans to a team. As a result, for instance in Hognestad's work (2006), players were not included among the first three factors that impacted Norwegian fans' support for English teams. For some of the examined fans Norwegian players in an English team negatively affected their relationship with it. Some of the most dedicated fans did not consider one's support for a particular team due to the presence of a native player as a serious motivation.

The comparison of the ways through which international fans of global teams in other studies and Polish fans in this study manifested their support for their teams leads to more unambiguous conclusions. The existing literature identified three common outcomes of fan support for global teams linked to fan consumption behaviours – consumption of the team-related media content, merchandise purchase and acquiring tickets to teams' games (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). The media consumption was one of the most popular ways fans manifested their support – more popular than merchandise purchase, while ticket purchase was in fact marginal. This coincides with this work's findings.

Attendance at live games (and at the same time ticket purchase) was so unpopular among fans in this study that it was dropped as early as in the factor analysis. It does not come as a surprise as foreign fans of global sports teams do not travel often to watch games of their teams at the stadia. Instead they 'attend' sports events through media and therefore the consumption of team-related content is high among overseas fans, which was also revealed in this study. Team product purchase (including merchandise) in the case of Polish fans was the least popular behaviour and, similarly to other

research, was included at the bottom of satellite fans' consumption behaviour list. It is difficult to compare the scale of purchase – based on the interviews with fans it may be concluded that Polish fans buy team merchandise less frequently than foreign fans of global teams in the existing research. While fans in Poland declared having one shirt of their favourite team, the majority of other satellite fans purchased them once a season (e.g. Kerr and Emery 2011). It is worth emphasising that most of the past studies focused on merchandise purchase but did not examine whether fans purchase other team-related products which in this research turned out to be more popular among Polish fans than merchandise.

Finally, among the ways fans manifested their support for global sports teams the interaction variable brings attention due to different interaction activities that predominated in the Polish fan environment compared to satellite fans from other countries. This variable gained little attention in the literature as an outcome of one's support for a sports team. Those few works (Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016) demonstrated, however, that it was not rare for satellite fans to interact with each other face-to-face: they often 'got together' to watch their teams' games. Polish fans, on the other hand, hardly ever interacted with fellow fans in person and focused on online relationships.

4. Conclusions

This chapter first dealt with the analysis of the data gathered in the quantitative fan survey and follow-up interviews with fans; then it went on to interpret the final study's findings. The first step in the survey data analysis was factor analysis as a result of which eleven factors were identified. It confirmed eight out of eleven original variables included in the initial model and incorporated into the questionnaire. Additionally, in this process a new outcome variable – interaction – emerged. However, the factor analysis did not manage to reduce the variables to a more manageable number. By its nature it also did not help to establish the nature of the relationship between the variables. Therefore, the subsequent regression analyses were performed.

The regression analyses allowed the researcher to determine the direction and strength of the relationships between the global sports team brand favouriteness antecedents and global sports team brand favouriteness (here multiple regression was employed) and between the brand favouriteness variable and its outcomes (through a series of simple linear regressions). Additionally, the analyses led to the reduction of the number of variables in the model by identifying the statistically significant antecedents of brand favouriteness: brand identity, players/drivers and engagement through marketing. The regression analysis provided statistical proof for four hypothesised relationships between brand favouriteness and its outcomes (product purchase, media consumption, advocacy and loyalty). It also revealed that there is a positive relationship between brand favouriteness and the new interaction variable.

For the purpose of triangulation the quantitative findings were verified in the follow-up interviews with fans, which added depth to and threw light on the numerical data. The interviews demonstrated that indeed Polish fans choose their favourite global teams under the influence of team brand identity and engaging marketing activities planned and executed by the management of their favourite teams. They also indicated the existence of the negative relationship between the players/drivers antecedent and brand favouriteness. Furthermore, the strength of the relationship between brand favouriteness and each of its outcomes revealed in a series of simple linear regressions was confirmed – with loyalty being the most popular way the fans demonstrated feelings towards their favourite global teams, and team-related product purchase behaviour being the least popular.

In the interpretation of the final model of antecedents and outcomes of global sports team brand favouriteness the researcher looked for references to the existing works which demonstrated that to some extent the final study's findings are in line with research dealing with fans' support for international teams. In addition, while interpreting the antecedents the researcher looked at how the special nature of sports team brands impacts their global appeal. It was also indicated that the consequences of supporting global sports team brands by fans worldwide result in particular benefits for those global teams. Finally, the similarities and differences between Polish fans in this study and other foreign-based fans of global sports teams revealed in past research were discussed.

Chapter VI: Implications of study and recommendations

Overview

The following chapter outlines the implications of this study – both practical and theoretical. The implications refer to the findings drawn from the qualitative and quantitative research and the observations formulated in the course of the literature review. In addition, possible future directions for further exploration of the subject of sports team branding are suggested.

1. Implications for subject literature

Global sports team brands seen from the fan perspective is the phenomenon that the researcher explored in this work. Therefore, in the hypothesised model of global sports team brand favouriteness and in the hypotheses posed in the initial phase of this study the word 'global' refers to sports team brands. Before proceeding with the discussion on the most important implications of this study's findings for the subject literature, first it will be briefly reminded why the researcher regarded as important to focus specifically on global sports team brands in this study.

In this study a global sports team brand is a sports team brand recognised throughout the world (outside its traditional area of consumption) and capable of generating an emotional connection with its fans on a global basis. Global sports team brands are understood as leaders in their category, visible globally, perceived by people as stronger, better and differentiated from other sports team brands (Charumbira 2016: 19).

Sports team brands operating on a global scale are influenced by factors and receive diverse opportunities being – to some extent – a consequence of the scale they operate on. Past research examined determinants that specifically drive an establishment and development of global sports team brands and subsequent outcomes of their global status assuming that they should vary from those concerning local, regional or even national sports team brands. Kerr and Gladden (2008) demonstrated that some antecedents and consequences of team brand equity in the global marketplace are specific and different to those that impact and accompany a brand equity creation of teams in the domestic sports market. Richelieu and colleagues (Couvelaere and Richelieu 2005; Richelieu 2012) suggested the strategies allowing football teams to move from a national team stage to a global team stage should be different to those undertaken by teams at lower stages of development (regional or national). This is not to say that the mechanisms governing the development of global and non-global sports team brands are entirely different – Kerr and Gladden (2008) demonstrated some brand equity determinants and consequences are similar for teams on the global and domestic (and even collegiate) levels. However, not all the antecedents and outcomes referring to teams operating on a non-global scale can be directly applied to those operating globally. Therefore,

in this work it is emphasised in the hypotheses that they refer not to any sports team brand but to global sports team brand specifically.

One of the most important accomplishments of this work is that the global sports team brands are examined here from the fans' point of view, while the majority of researchers have investigated these brands from a managerial perspective. To date, related published research has analysed for instance what factors, according to professionals (branding experts, managers etc.), determine the position of the strong sports brands they manage (e.g. Richelieu and Pons 2006; Hill and Vincent 2006; Kase et al. 2007; Richelieu and Desbordes 2009). As shown in the interviews with branding specialists conducted as a part of this study, in general among the global teams' brands management there is the awareness of the strong impact that strong sports team brands have on their fans and of the necessity of understanding how these brands are perceived by their fans. Nevertheless, there is little work that would present global sports team brands from this perspective.

The model outlined in this study allowed the researcher to look at global sports team brands from the perspective of fans – and to understand, firstly, what global sports team brand components make fans choose their favourite sports team brand and, secondly, how fans demonstrate their attachment towards this brand. Nowadays, when sports team brands make an effort to stand out from the crowd and when the competition between sports brands for the fans' attention and money is severe, the knowledge of how sports fans choose their favourite team brands is vital.

The strength of this study lies in the fact that while it presents the perspective of fans on global brands, it focuses on international fans (i.e. Polish fans of global sports team brands) who in sports brand strategies often do not get enough attention. What the existing work usually does is to focus on teams' domestic fans (e.g. Wann and Branscombe 1990; Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002a; Mahony et al. 2002; Neale and Funk 2005; Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler 2008; Biscaia et al. 2013). However, to the researcher's knowledge a limited body of research has examined how international sports fans perceive teams from countries other than their home country and how they demonstrate the fact that a particular global team is their favourite. There are researchers and branding experts (including some of those interviewed in the first stage of this study) who claim that so-called satellite supporters of sports teams should be treated as a specific group of fans (e.g. Bodet and Chanavat 2010; Kerr and Emery 2016) and proved it is necessary to differentiate between overseas and local fans of the same team (Kerr and Gladden 2008). As mentioned earlier in this work the term refers to those fans who in different territories support a specific foreign-based team (Kerr and Gladden 2008). The fact that satellite fans do not live within the team's geographic proximity shapes the character of their support. As opposed to the team's local fans (who come from its traditional area of consumption) satellite fans were not naturally born to it because of proximity or history. Therefore, other factors must determine their decision of choosing their favourite team (Kerr and Gladden 2008; Kerr and Emery 2016).

Particularly in the case of global sports team brands it is important to treat satellite fans as a distinct group of supporters, for instance Polish fans of Manchester United would differ – to some extent – from its Manchester-based or even English supporters. Clearly each sports team may be supported by

overseas fans in various territories but naturally global sports teams' endeavours attract the largest numbers of fans throughout the world. As these teams operate in the global market they establish the relationships with various fans – not only on a local but first of all on a global basis. In the case of the strongest teams it is not rare that the number of international fans exceeds the number of domestic fans (Westerbeek and Smith 2003; Santomier and Costabiei 2010).

Those satellite fans bring measurable profits to sports team brands, which is reflected in the results of this study. However, they contribute to teams' budgets in a different way than local fans: contrary to them their contribution to gate revenue is marginal. Global teams try to monetise overseas fans' support through for instance merchandise sales (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet 2013). This explains an increasing migration of sports team merchandise transactions towards the internet, which serves growing revenue just from their foreign fans (PWC 2011).

If the team's satellite fans differ from its local fans, this implies that the team brand management needs to tailor its marketing/branding strategy specifically to them, which was emphasised in this work by the interviewed experts. Nevertheless, in research so far there is hardly any answer to the question how a sports team should build its strategies towards overseas fans.

This study addresses those concerns. This is reflected for instance in the final set of the consequences of global sports team brand favouriteness identified in this research. While these outcomes may be manifested by sports fans in general, they are in particular appropriate for overseas fans. For instance, the interaction with other fans and their favourite team is probably important for almost all fans. Nevertheless, for international ones it is often the only, most intense and direct form of contact with the team brand community. If a sports team does not focus enough on communicating with its fans in its brand strategies, especially the overseas fans will be left disappointed and omitted. It seems that especially in the case of this group of fans the relationship with their favourite global teams has to be constantly refreshed and managed properly, since this determines its development and subsequent benefits for the teams. Globally dispersed fans need to have access to their teams through various media that allow them to virtually 'attend' games of their favourite teams (Westerbeek and Smith 2003; Rein, Kotler and Shields 2006; Bolle 2016) and be exposed to those teams' activities that make them feel a part of a wider team brand community.

In the light of a variety of factors determining the position of global sports brands and benefits these brands gain as a consequence of their strong position, this study examines the dominant elements from the subject literature and extends this analysis into new areas.

The antecedents of global sports team brand favouriteness identified in this study include players/drivers, engagement through marketing and brand identity. This means that the most common determinants known from the managerial and fan literature on global team brands such as management, history and longevity of a sports team, brand identity and values, athletes within the team and its on-field success, are only partially reflected in the final model established in this work. It is the first three factors from the above list that have been particularly popular in the managerial strand

of research (e.g. Hill and Vincent 2006; Richelieu and Pons 2006; Kase et al. 2007). This may suggest that there is a difference in the way the factors that determine the position of sports team brands are perceived from the fan perspective compared to the managerial perspective reflected in many existing studies.

Taking into account this observation, the question arises whether there are attempts among branding experts to fully understand why sports fans decide to support a particular team. Is there a focus in brand strategies on not only how to gain new fans but also how not to let down the existing ones? Even extremely loyal fans can judge whether or not their favourite team brand meets their expectations. These issues leave space for further studies.

While it is important which variables were included in the model, the fact that the media exposure and team success antecedents were removed from it is also noteworthy. The media (satellite and thematic television) exposure was dropped from the model due to a lack of a relationship with global sports team brand favouriteness. The fact that the variable as it stands did not have any significant impact on the brand favouriteness is important as it demonstrates that, according to Polish fans, a team's presence on traditional media is not a decisive factor for them to support a team. It might seem that this contradicts past research which rather emphasised the vital role of socialisation agents such as media in strengthening fans' bond with their teams (e.g. Sutton et al. 1997; Kerr and Emery 2011). However, it may not always be the case as while media are more important at the beginning of a fan relationship with a team, with time other factors can be more prominent (Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Hognestad 2006). Therefore, the presence of a team on media may be useful in building team brand awareness (e.g. Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998) but it may not be enough for fans across the world to see in a particular sports team brand their favourite and for a team brand to win fans long term (in which case other antecedents may turn out to be significant). Football teams which nowadays start their international expansion in the most profitable markets such as Asia do not benefit from the pioneer advantage any more (as Manchester United or Real Madrid, which were the first to expand their brands into those territories, did). 'Therefore, a great level of awareness will not be enough in such an intense competition and professional football clubs will need to rethink their overall strategy in order to distinguish themselves from the other competitors (Bodet and Chanavat 2010: 57). In these new circumstances a team's exposure in broadcasts which can significantly contribute to building its awareness in various geographical territories will not be sufficient to distinguish the team from its competitors. Although some of the strongest leagues, for instance European football leagues such as the EPL or Spanish La Liga, are televised internationally it does not mean that all their teams – both the top ones (e.g. Manchester United or Real Madrid) and the teams from the bottom of the league table – possess the same global brand status. Therefore, team brand management needs to look for new ways that would help their team to stand out from others in this crowded global market rather than relying on television exposure.

The fact that no relationship was found between team success and global sports team brand favouriteness is important as it demonstrates that such transient team assets as team on-field success may not be significant for satellite fans represented by Polish fans in this study. Instead they may ground their support for their favourite teams in other more enduring factors such as brand identity that, according to this work's results, turned out to be the most influential antecedent in the model. The importance of athletic success as a factor attracting fans to support sports teams – in particular satellite – is widely recognised in research (e.g. Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Mahony, Howard and Madrigal 2000; End et al. 2002; Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002a; Kerr and Gladden 2008). However, some fans might be put off by winning teams which they perceive as dominant and boring, which Bodet and Chanavat (2010) demonstrated in their study of Chinese fans of EPL teams. Besides, winning and losing is part of the nature of sports competition and some fans support their teams regardless of their on-field performance – this was shown in this study and is reflected in past research. For instance, fans high in identification are capable of establishing a loyal, long-term relationship with their team (Sutton et al. 1997; Kwon, Trail and Anderson 2005; Theodorakis, Wann and Weaver 2012) despite its poor on-field failures. If success is insignificant, other team brand assets should become vital for building fan support for their favourite global brand. This research revealed a key role of brand identity. Compared to the relationship of fans with their teams based on on-field success, the relationships rooted in long-term brand assets tend to be much stronger. This is consistent to some extent with the opinion of some researchers who recognised that distinct identity allows teams to go smoothly through times of failure (Richelieu and Pons 2006; Richelieu, Lopez and Desbordes 2008). In the opinion of the researcher this appreciation for the team's identity is typical for mature fans who are aware of what decides the uniqueness of their favourite team brands. While the team's local fans are naturally familiar with its values due to its geographic proximity, this study shows that foreign-based supporters also possess a good knowledge of their teams.

As for the outcomes for a team, from the fact that it possesses a strong global brand, in the studies published to date the general direction is a focus on consequences such as merchandise purchase, game attendance and broadcasting that directly generate financial profits (Kerr and Gladden 2008; Menefee and Casper 2011). This work acknowledges that benefits that a sports team brand gains from the fact of being global should not only be limited to tangible, purely economic value. Having identified those tangible outcomes such as team-related product purchase and media consumption this work reminds that there is more than that: fan loyalty – a construct often discussed in the literature – is also a vital consequence of having a strong brand for a team; fans are best advocates for the brands of their favourite teams and on a day-to-day basis seek a possibility to interact in the real and virtual world with their team and its other fans and this often becomes an important part of their lives.

The above-mentioned financial profits are vital for each sports brand but they do not form the holistic picture of the outcomes of having a global brand. In addition to these tangible, easily measurable benefits that have an immediate effect on the teams' budgets there are also other benefits less tangible but equally important that long term may also translate into economic gain.

Central to the model is the brand favouriteness variable that embodies fans' attachments and feelings towards their favourite brands. Brand favouriteness emerged from the data obtained through the expert interviews. The concept refers to a feeling or a positive attitude that a sports fan develops towards his or her favourite team brand. Brand favouriteness develops towards one team brand, the fan's 'first choice', that he or she finds particularly appealing, and that is preferred over other team brands. It manifests itself in people's everyday lives and can potentially lead to beneficial pro-brand behaviours.

A comparison between brand favouriteness and other popular theoretical constructs demonstrates its distinctiveness. Unlike such concepts as fan engagement, identification or loyalty, brand favouriteness does not exist at different levels of intensity. Moreover, it is not based on a oneness with a brand as identification is – a fan who chooses a team brand as his or her favourite does not need to perceive the similarity between the brand and himself/herself. As brand favouriteness is a feeling towards a team brand, contrary to fan engagement, it does not capture the interactive relationship between a fan and a brand; unlike loyalty it does not include a behavioural component; as opposed to advocacy it is not a behavioural consequence of a fan-brand relationship but describes such a relationship itself.

The significance of the construct and its unique character seem to result from the fact that in a straightforward way it captures the relationship between a fan and a specific sports team brand – after all, many fans can easily indicate what their favourite brand is. Due to brand favouriteness simplicity it is reasonably easy to understand what it captures. As this construct emerged from the interviews with practitioners its relevance to the real world sports team management problems can be enhanced.

This is a novel study in Polish research in sports that to such an extent focuses on the relationship between fans and the brands of sports teams they support. While the notion of a sports team operating as a business has been accepted in Polish sports research and industry, still sports team brand issues have not been explored enough. This study contributes to the progression of this discussion by providing insight into the Polish fans' perspective of sports team brands. Polish sports fans turned out to be mature fans who appreciate a team that is able to develop well-thought-out brand strategy, and who actively maintain the relationship with the team brand and its community. As such Polish fans would be an interesting subject of further studies within sports branding in Poland. There is a need to advance this research strand since, as this work demonstrated, branding issues are key in strengthening sports team's relationship with fans, and a brand itself can be an extremely valuable team asset.

Polish fans in some aspects demonstrated a similarity to other satellite fans whose relationship with foreign-based teams was examined in past research. Factors such as team brand identity and players which motivated fans in other studies to support overseas teams turned out to affect also Polish fans' decision of choosing their favourite team. Similarly to Norwegian or American supporters of the EPL teams, Polish fans tend to be involved in various pro-team behaviours such as consuming team-related media content or acquiring team-related products. Nevertheless, there are some differences

between Polish and other fans concerning the antecedents behind their support and – to a lesser extent – their consumption behaviour.

What is distinctive about Polish fans is that, as mentioned above, the team's on-field success and media exposure have no significant impact on their decision to support. Whereas for other satellite fans especially the presence of teams on media matters greatly. This may seem to be a surprising finding as media play a role of socialisation agent facilitating the development of team support of fans in general but of overseas fans in particular (e.g. Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Sutton et al. 1997; Kerr and Emery 2011, 2016). Moreover, any fan prefers to associate with winning teams (Mahony, Howard and Madrigal 2000; End et al. 2002) but success seems to a particularly good predictor of overseas fans' support (Branscombe and Wann 1991). In this research however, as mentioned above, insignificance of success may result from the maturity of Polish fans who, having possessed good knowledge of their teams, often root their support in more long-term factors. For such fans also media exposure is less important as its impact proved to be especially meaningful for building the team awareness usually at the beginning of fans' relationship with teams (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998; Hognestad 2006).

The Polish fans' attitude to the players variable is also characteristic and interesting. Similarly to other studies conducted among overseas fans it is an important factor affecting their support for teams. However, in this study the variable is negatively related to brand favouriteness and too many star athletes or native players in the squad may put Polish fans in the study off the team brand. This is a consequence of a common among Polish fans perception of the superiority of the team concept over an individual player. It differentiates Polish fans from the majority of satellite fans from Norway, France or the US who considered the player antecedent to impact positively their support (e.g. Chanavat and Bodet 2009; Kerr, Smith and Anderson 2011; Kerr and Emery 2016). In general in sports research a player is recognised as an important team asset positively impacting fans identification or loyalty towards teams (e.g. Wann, Tucker and Schrader 1996; Funk et al. 2001). However, it is necessary to make one reservation here. While the majority of studies emphasise a positive impact of players within the team, the opposite attitude of Polish fans is not exceptional as it might seem at first sight. In the above-mentioned studies of satellite fans a player factor was not enough to attract some groups of followers to a team (although they constituted the minority in samples), in some cases having a negative impact on this relationship (Hognestad 2006; Chanavat and Bodet 2009; Bodet and Chanavat 2010). Also studies conducted among non-satellite fans showed the negative relationship between star players and team brand loyalty in the US sport (Gladden and Funk 2001), and player attachment and spectator behaviour in Japanese soccer (Mahony et al. 2002).

As the last word on the brand favouriteness model of antecedents and outcomes its relevance needs to be emphasised. The researcher considers that it was a legitimate approach to use a practitioner's experience and insight to develop the model of brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes in the initial stage of this study. Having conducted interviews with the marketing/branding experts the researcher based the hypothesised model on the patterns that emerged from the interview data, supported by the available information from past research. This led to proposing a model that is well

grounded not only in the literature but also in the reality, as recommended in past studies (Panda and Gupta 2014; Toffel 2016). Therefore, a practitioner's perspective enhanced the relevance and applicability of research to the decisions of those responsible for building and management of sports team brands.

The interviews with practitioners allowed the researcher to come up with a comprehensive model where most of the variables were derived based on practical experiences and knowledge of brand managers and this allows the researcher to believe that they adequately represent the most important drivers and outcomes of global sports team brands. These variables should also be of interest to practitioners in the field of sports team brand management – after all, they were included in the model based on the opinion of practising managers. The interviews demonstrated that practitioners put much emphasis on the variables that can be influenced by team brand management and the outcomes that are easy to measure and represent desirable benefits for a team brand. According to Panda and Gupta (2014), research examining the relationship between such variables should be of interest to practitioners. Among the variables in the model the majority are team-related antecedents that are within the control of team brand managers. The benefits for the team in a model linked to such outcomes as fans' consumption behaviours can be expressed in teams' revenue.

Finally, it was confirmed, as emphasised in past research, that expert interviews are a useful and valuable source of knowledge generating rich empirical data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). To obtain a realistic perspective on a research problem it is best to collect information from people who have experienced it. The interviews greatly contributed to not only the development of a comprehensive research framework but also further informed survey development.

2. Implications for methodology

The theoretical model of brand favouriteness proposed in this work was built, tested and validated using a mix of approaches – qualitative and quantitative. Mixed methodology, defined by Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989: 256) as a 'design that includes at least one quantitative method to collect numbers and one qualitative method to collect words', turned out to be extremely useful in answering research questions that required the exploration of the nature of the global team brand seen from the overseas fans' perspective. This approach also helped to make generalisations and added in-depth meaning to the quantitative data.

The first stage of research – qualitative interviews with brand experts – helped to understand the phenomenon of global sports team brands, i.e. what determines the strength of global sports team brands and what results from it for those sports entities. At the same time, the data gathered from branding specialists (along with information obtained from the literature review) was the basis for building up the model tested in the second phase of data collection and analysis, i.e. a fan survey

conducted in the Polish sports fan environment. Eleven interviewed experts were selected on the basis of purposive sampling. This means that the main criteria were not so much the sample representativeness but the interviewees' utility for the purpose of this research and the extent to which they offered the opportunity to learn about brands of global sports teams (Patton 1990). The quantitative part of the work facilitated formulating the general research conclusions. Due to the quantitative methodology employed, the study results can be applied to different settings. Finally, information gathered from a group of Polish sports fans interviewed in the confirmatory interviews helped to illuminate the survey findings and enabled their interpretation. In progression from interviews with brand experts through a fan survey to confirmatory interviews with sports fans a holistic methodological approach to the studied phenomenon was adopted and this constitutes the value of this research.

The use of both methodologies – qualitative and quantitative – is beneficial for one more reason. It allows the triangulation of the results of this research that makes them more reliable. It is because at the core of triangulation is the employment of multiple measures to assess the same phenomenon based on the various information sources. This mix of data-collection types and methods of enquiry helped to translate the precise language of statistics to a narrative and added intensity and in-depth meaning to numerical data. Methodological triangulation is not only a good practice in conducting research but also a way of overcoming the weaknesses resulting from quantitative and qualitative methodologies, i.e. the limited reliability and applicability of the qualitative findings, and difficulties with the validity of the quantitative ones. As a result, triangulation leads to a less biased picture of the examined phenomenon.

The strength of the quantitative data is supported by the survey sample size which entitles the author to make generalisations from these findings. The final number of respondents exceeded the sample size required to run factor and regression analyses – statistical techniques for examining quantitative data that were employed in this study (Wilson Van Voorhis and Morgan 2007). One of the reasons for such a significant number of Polish sports fans who participated in the survey was using an online questionnaire. In addition, the number of fans who completed the survey could also have been impacted by the place where the survey link was available. Among others it was published on the website and social media profile of *Przegląd Sportowy*, the oldest Polish sports daily.

Additionally, the survey instrument allowed the author to collect the data in a reasonably short period of time. Despite the concerns of some authors, this method of conducting surveys is becoming more and more acceptable among researchers. According to Gates and McDaniel (2007), the quality of data collected through traditional mail questionnaires and online surveys is similar, while the costs of building up a survey and delivering it to respondents along with the time of data collection have changed in favour of internet surveys.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned advantages of using the online survey format in this study one reservation should be made, which is also highlighted in section 4 of this chapter (Research

limitations and recommendations for future research). Although a significant number of respondents completed the survey, the majority of them were football fans and other sports were underrepresented. As a result, it did not allow the researcher to make comparisons between fans of the teams from different sports. This suggests that while the online questionnaire instrument was useful in collecting responses from the interest group such as sports fans in a short period of time and at no cost, it did not entirely fulfil its role.

Finally, the reliability of the questionnaire scales used to operationalise nine variables included in the final model of brand favouriteness determinants and outcomes is satisfactory and in line with requirements concerning research methodology set out in the literature. Most of those nine scales demonstrate strong reliability. The Chronbach's alpha scores for two of them – 'players/drivers' and 'interaction' – are lower but still within the acceptable limits. These results suggest that all scales used to measure the final set of variables within the model can be adopted in further studies in the area of sports team branding.

3. Implications for practitioners

The model of brand favouriteness is prescriptive in nature and may be used by practitioners responsible for brand development as a general framework to assess the way fans perceive their favourite global sports team brands and, subsequently, to leverage team brands that are at different levels of development. The awareness of the antecedents that most and least affect fans' decisions about supporting a particular global team, and the knowledge of the most common consequences of having a global sports team brand that attracts a big group of international fans, are potential tools in managing the international strategies of these brands.

Most practitioners who create global sports team brands and other branding specialists seem to be divided about the place of fans of those teams in the strategies of their brands. This was echoed in the interviews with the experts conducted at the beginning of the data-collection process. Some of them suggested that a sports fan is simply a sports fan, and that they do not see any need for building separate – for international and local fans – branding strategies of the sports teams.

Therefore, in addition to presenting the brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes, this work reveals that a team's business manager should be aware of the importance of tailoring the team brand development strategy to the needs of international fans. This is because the importance of some fan behaviours and motivations is perceived differently depending on various groups of fans. For instance, product purchase gets much attention from researchers and practitioners but in the case of some groups of overseas fans (as illustrated by Polish fans in this study) the benefits it brings to sports teams should not be overestimated.

A team product for Polish sports fans is 'a tangible representation of the relationship or connection with the brand' (Donavan, Janda and Suh 2006: 128) but they believe that products do not make a true loyal sports fan. Also the price of the products is not realistic in the opinion of Polish fans. This is mostly due to differences in earnings between Central and Western Europe and could be one of the possible explanations for the different product purchase behaviours; further research could help to understand this issue.

Instead, Polish fans of international teams put an emphasis on other, more intangible means of expressing feelings towards their favourite teams such as interacting with the team (if it creates conditions for such an interaction) and members of the team fandom. This is especially important for those fans who rarely – if ever – have the opportunity to watch their favourite teams' live performances and who by means of online channels (fan discussion forums, live chats with players or drivers etc.) maintain their relationship with the team and its brand community. It is intended that this research will facilitate understanding that this form of contact helps to strengthen the aforementioned relationship that fans have with their favourite team brand and that teams can widely benefit from it. A satisfied fan who on a day-to-day basis maintains his or her links with the team is highly loyal towards the team brand and is its best advocate. Nevertheless, the results of the study prove that there is still not enough focus on the team brand strategies to grow the team–fan relationship and fan loyalty. Few global sports teams are open to their fans' expectations and facilitate the interaction process by, for example, encouraging setting up their fan clubs overseas. Additionally, team brand management should use the opportunity offered by various virtual platforms, so-called 'third place', where fans communicate with each other, exchange information about the team or share their opinions on team-related matters. Such platforms proved to be extremely helpful in developing and stimulating fan interest in team brands (Kerr and Emery 2016). It is anticipated that this work will contribute to a revision of brand policies towards international fans.

The final study's findings also shed light on the role of practitioners in the sports team brands they build and manage. As is indicated in the analysed subject literature, management teams responsible for creating global sports brands are an important component of that brand. Some authors consider management to be one of the key factors contributing to strength of the above-mentioned brands. This was partially confirmed by the results of this work, because engagement through marketing was identified as one of the determinants of global sports team brand favouriteness. And it is management that builds brand and marketing strategies of sports brands and introduces them through the use of appropriate tools. It is also responsible for those marketing activities that engage fans with the brand.

Nevertheless, as indicated in the model developed in this study, marketing is the least influential of all three antecedents, and therefore management and marketing teams should not overestimate its role. Marketing is important but not the most important for the fans' perception of their favourite sports team brands as was demonstrated in the results of the fan survey and in-depth interviews with a selected group of those fans. In addition, Polish fans of global teams have various expectations with regard to the teams' marketing addressed to them, and very often what – in terms of marketing – is offered to

them is not what they would anticipate. It was a rather common view of the interviewed fans that the marketing activities undertaken by their favourite global sports team brands are simply unsuitable, mainly because the teams fail to recognise expectations of international fans and the circumstances in which they operate. It is usually due to the fact that most of the biggest sports teams treat their overseas fans in the same way as local fans.

The model established in this work should not only be reserved for global sports teams that were examined in this study. Managers of teams aspiring to strengthen the position of their brands may – without doubt – treat it as guidance. It is because this model gives an understanding of which areas of sports team brand operations should be strengthened, in order that this impacts brand leveraging. At the same time, this model may be helpful in assessing those consequences of fans' support of their favourite teams that brand management might not have entirely been aware of or that have been underestimated. The model may be adapted to the conditions of any sports team – regardless of whether it is a recognised brand or a brand that is just at the beginning of the building-up process. If for any reason – for instance organisational or financial – it may not be possible to develop some key brand elements, the analysis of the brand situation may at least reveal where brand potential can still be hidden.

Due to the fact that the practitioners interviewed in the first research phase contributed to shaping research methodology through providing information that supported the model development process this research is grounded in the real world and relevant for practitioners (Panda and Gupta 2014; Toffel 2016). The model of brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes, that was later tested in the consumer environment, should improve the decisions of practising team brand managers as the variables were included in it based on the information collected from a group of experts – if from the point of view of those interviewed these variables were meaningful then it can be assumed they should be meaningful also for other practitioners. A proof of that is, according to recommendations of Panda and Gupta (2014), most of the antecedents included in the model were those that can be influenced by marketing/brand managers of sports teams, which they can manoeuvre to achieve a desired outcome and which are usually of interest to practitioners. This is the case of for instance brand identity that is definitely within the control of team brand managers as much as another variable, engagement through marketing, covering teams' marketing and communications efforts. As for the desired outcomes (dependent variables) marketers are usually interested in those that can be effectively measured (Panda and Gupta 2014). In the model developed in this study most of the variables indicated by the interviewed experts referring to fan consumption behaviours are directly linked to a team's measurable benefits (i.e. revenues). Sports fans can easily name their favourite brand and manifest their 'favouriteness' towards it by purchasing team products or consuming team-related media content, which generates profits for the brand. Almost certainly commercial success is, from the point of view of team management, an ultimate desirable outcome for most team brands.

In the case of this research practitioners enhanced its relevance by contributing to the hypothesised model development through the information provided in in-depth exploratory interviews. However,

there are also other ways of enhancing practical relevance of studies recommended in research (Toffel 2016). Some authors recommend organising brainstorming sessions to collect relevant information from practitioners (Loos 2005) (although this might be quite challenging in the field of management). Academics in the management field may also try to establish a board of practising managers who contacted regularly could provide insights to research as early as at the stage of formulating a research question to clarify whether answering it is of any value to them (Panda and Gupta 2014; Toffel 2016). Towards the end of the research process practitioners could share their opinion on possible implications of research findings as for how they might impact managerial decisions (Toffel 2016).

4. Research limitations and recommendations for future research

It is important to stress that this research has a number of limitations. Although purposive sampling was used in order to select the interviewees in both stages of the interviews, the data-collection process proved to be difficult among the initially selected interviewees. Therefore, final samples of interviewees consisted of those individuals who were identified as easily available at the time when both stages of interviews took place.

The survey is biased towards football fans. The researcher surveyed fans of global sports teams from different sports disciplines such as football, basketball and motor racing (Formula 1). This decision was made because these sports are considered to have worldwide appeal. Football is commonly referred to as a global game and the European football leagues are considered to be the strongest and most profitable football divisions. NBA and Formula 1 are perceived as flagship – and global – divisions for their disciplines. However, most of the recruited survey respondents turned out to be fans of global football teams, while the global teams from other disciplines were chosen less frequently – the basketball team Chicago Bulls was the most popular non-football team for 2 per cent of the fans; Ferrari F1 was selected as a favourite global team by 1.5 per cent of the individuals. This reflects the fact that, as in other European countries, the majority of sports team fans are football fans (SportBusiness Group 2014).

Therefore, an important contribution to better understanding of what motivates fans and how they demonstrate their feelings towards their favourite teams would be research comparing opinions of various groups of fans with regard to these issues. This work indicates the direction in which future studies in this area could progress and suggests a possible research methodology.

Nevertheless, such a study would probably constitute a challenge for quantitative researchers who would have to think over carefully how to recruit survey respondents. As was mentioned above, the use of an online survey was determined, among others, by the fact that the type of respondents who the study was addressed at was not easily accessible. In future research obtaining a sufficient number

of responses from representative samples of various groups (at least two) of fans of global sports teams or sports disciplines would demand a well-thought-out sampling strategy and would definitely take more time than in the case of this study.

However, this work is one of the first attempts to explore the sports fan perspective on the determinants and consequences of global sports team brands. As such, it can be considered as a development for the sports branding research. Nevertheless, further work is necessary in order to expand some of the issues identified in this research.

This study relied on data from one group of fans of global sports teams – Polish fans. Future research replicating this study in another country would be helpful in examining if there are any international differences in fans' perspectives on the global team brand characteristics they find attractive and in the ways they demonstrate their support of their favourite brands.

A particularly interesting aspect to explore in this context would be conducting similar research among fans from those countries where support for international and global sports team brands is especially strong, for instance from China. This would explain why some of the world's global football and NBA basketball teams are so popular there. In order to take advantage from their increasing popularity some global football teams such as Real Madrid, Manchester United, FC Valencia, Inter Milan or FC Bayern Munich go on tours to China for commercial rather than sports purposes. On the other hand, investors from China have recently decided to acquire stakes in football clubs across Europe. There were some studies conducted in China (e.g. Chadwick 2007; Bodet and Chanavat 2010; Menefee and Casper 2011); nevertheless they have not depicted a holistic picture of determinants and outcomes of Chinese fans' support of global teams or focused on fans of one particular sport.

Additionally, further exploration of the concept of the player/driver in the team is necessary. In a situation where global teams sign star players to benefit not only from their sporting skills but also from their image, the conclusion stemming from this study that the player/driver factor negatively impacts the way how overseas fans evaluate their favourite global team may come as a certain surprise, especially given that the importance of the role of players is generally recognised in the literature – with the exceptions of the groups of fans from Norway and China (Hognestad 2006; Bodet and Chanavat 2010) having a similar view on the role of star and native players in the English football teams as the view of the Polish fans in this study.

The common trend evident in many international sports teams – especially in those most prosperous – is that they spend a significant part of their budgets on player or driver acquisition. For instance, according to the FIFA Transfer Matching System (TMS) report, football teams spent £2.7bn on transfer fees in 2015 (Lawton 2015). How much of those acquisition decisions is a carefully thought-out concept of team building up? How much is there reflection whether this newly acquired athlete can fit into the team or whether his individualism will dominate it? On the other hand, how much is there a simple desire to have the current top player in the team? The examples of a few international teams from the past show that this last scenario does not necessary bring expected results.

As this study demonstrates the player/driver concept is a complex one. Only recently there have appeared a few studies in which the nature of players forming a sports team has been thoroughly examined (Pifer et al. 2015; Hasaan et al. 2016). However, it seems that this should be the starting point and that a deeper exploration of the role of players/drivers from the fan perspective would be beneficial. It would allow an investigation into whether the expectations towards the type of players/drivers and their role within the sports team – as outlined in this work – are common among fans from various countries or whether they are only specific to Polish fans.

One of the interesting aspects of this study's final findings is that they did not prove the relationship between the television exposure antecedent and the global sports team brand favouriteness. Media are described in the literature as a driver of globalisation – also the globalisation of sport. In addition, some of the interviewed experts indicated that media, and television in particular, are vital for international sports teams as they facilitate spreading information about those teams across the globe. Nevertheless, from the perspective of Polish sports fans this factor turned out to be not so crucial. Therefore, subsequent analyses may be needed to reassess this relationship. Further attention may also be needed as for how to conceptualise and measure the media exposure variable.

Two other scales used in this study to measure the players/drivers variable and the interaction variable may also require further development. Although they turned out to be reliable, their Chronbach's alpha scores were lower compared to the reliability scores of other scales employed in this study.

Finally, the researcher believes that the list of the brand favouriteness antecedents and outcomes is not closed. The values of R^2 suggest that further research in this area may help to develop it.

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Appendix 1: List of key informants

Associate at the sports consultancy

Commercial director of the football club

Commercial manager of the Formula 1 team

Director of the sports marketing consultancy 1

Director of the sports marketing consultancy 2

Director of the sports marketing research company

Brand marketing director

Owner of the publishing company

PR consultancy director

President of the global communications agency

Researcher at the sports marketing research company

Head of CRM at the football team

Appendix 2: The schedule used in the interviews with sports industry experts

My name is Magdalena Trzcinska and I am a researcher at Coventry University, working with Professor Simon Chadwick, a founder and director of CIBS - the Centre for the International Business of Sport at Coventry University.

This interview is one of a series of interviews being carried out while gathering information for my research on strong global sports team brands. The purpose of this research is to outline the features of sports team brands that, in the opinion of their fans, have contributed to their global status and advise how brand strength can be built capitalising on fans' attachment to the brand. As a result of my research, I intend to formulate a set of guidelines for sports teams which they could use in the process of leveraging their brands. As one of my key informants, you would greatly contribute to this process.

I believe that as a practitioner within the area of branding working for successful sports brands you can provide valuable insight into my research. You are in a unique position to contribute to building a model of key components of successful sports team brands which will then be tested in the consumer environment.

I would like to ask you some questions about how global sports team brands are developed and what the outcomes of this development process are for such brands. As we go through the interview, if you have any questions about why I am asking you something, do let me know. Or if there is a question you do not want to answer, just say so.

If you agree, the interview will be recorded and subsequently transcribed. The information gathered from you (and other interviewees) will be combined into a report for my research. Once I have completed this stage of my research, I will provide you with a summary of findings if you are interested.

I realise this information may be sensitive. May I assure you that the contents of our discussion will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear in the final research report. At no stage will any details of this interview go beyond my PhD director, Simon Chadwick or myself.

Your consent form will be stored in a secure location, separate from the raw data (transcripts) itself. In this case you will only be identified on the interview transcript by your participant code number. When the data has been entered into a computer file, the interview transcript will only be associated with your code number.

Only my PhD director and I will have access to the recordings and transcripts. I will only retain them from the project until my final mark for my thesis has been given. They will then be destroyed.

Any questions before we begin?

I Sports brands vs non-sports brands

I would like to start with asking questions about brands in general. The purpose of this set of questions is to see what is so unique about sports brands in comparison with non-sports brands. The answer to the first question may seem to be complex. Therefore, I would like to ask you to present only your own thoughts on it.

1. What is a brand?

2. In your opinion, what makes a strong global (non-sports) brand?

Prompts:

e.g. worldwide appeal, availability on the global market, standardised product, ability to adapt to geographic and cultural differences, financial value

a. Are the characteristics and nature of a strong global sports brand the same as other strong brands (i.e. *a global brand* - recognised as an expert in a particular product category both in its home market and all over the world; uses consistent positioning across countries and addresses similar consumer needs worldwide)?

Prompts:

If there are any differences between sports and non-sports brands, what do they result from (e.g. symbolic nature of sports event, high loyalty and emotional attachment of sports fans, specific sports product, importance of on-field success for off-field branding activities)?

3. What measure would you use to assess brand strength?

Prompts: the brand financial value, the price premium, market share data, consumer loyalty, team's on-field results, expertise in a particular product category, brand position compared to its competitors in the same product category

II Strong global sports team brands and their determinants

Now I would like to focus solely on sports team brands. In the next set of questions I would like to ask you to think where a sports team brand derives its strength from? (MODEL)

4. What is a global sports team brand?

5. What are the key brand components that determine the strength and success of a global sports team brand?

Prompts:

Star players? Sports results? Good management? Traditional club values and brand heritage? Locality? Country of origin? Benefits for fans?

- a. **Is it necessary for a sports team brand to possess all these components in order to be considered as global?**

6. Which of the components you have just mentioned should be definitely employed by management in the process of building global sports team brand's success?

Prompts:

Does their choice depend on:

- a. the global sports brand's target market?
- b. a specific segment of consumers of this brand?
- c. the stage of brand's development?

7. How would you build sports team brand's strength and global appeal on the basis of the components listed in your answer to Q5?

8. In the process of building a status of global sports team brand what are the most important brand concepts (*concept – an idea expressing how something might be done, i.e. how a status of strong global sports team brand can be built*) that management should focus on?

Prompts:

e.g. brand identity, brand equity, brand image, brand awareness, brand personality, brand reputation, brand perception

- a. In your opinion, are they tools in this process or its final objectives? In other words, are they used in order to increase brand strength or on the contrary, they are developed as a result of the process of building strong brands and they are its ultimate objective?

9. What is so unique about strong global sports team brands that makes them appealing/attractive for fans?

Prompts: e.g. emotional benefits, star players, sport success, traditional club values and brand heritage

Appendix 3:

Questionnaire

Global sports team brands – from where do they derive their strength? A Polish fan perspective

Questionnaire

Coventry University
January 2013

The purpose of the survey

My name is Magdalena Trzcinska and I am a researcher at Coventry University. You are invited to participate in a survey. Participation will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. The purpose of this survey is to learn why you find your favourite global sports team brand appealing and how you demonstrate your attachment to it. A global sports team brand is understood as the brand of the team that attracts sports fans worldwide.

This survey is part of a research programme being carried out while gathering information for research on strong global sports team brands. The purpose of this research is to find out which features of global sports team brands, in the opinion of their fans, determine their global status and how fans can contribute to the strength of their favourite global sports team brand.

By responding to the questionnaire, your consent to take part in the study is assumed. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary; you can withdraw from the survey at any point of time, without giving a reason for doing so.

All of the information you provide is confidential. The information collected will be stored securely and anonymously. Upon conclusion of the research, all data will be destroyed. The results will be written up and presented as part of my thesis.

If you agree to be contacted for a follow-up interview or you wish to be entered into a prize draw to win your favourite team's kit, please provide your name and email address at the end of the questionnaire. Your name will not appear in the final research report.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, you can contact myself or my Director of Studies, Simon Chadwick, Professor of Sport Business Strategy and Marketing, Coventry University.

Demographic Questions

In this section, you will be asked about your own background.

Q1 Which of the following best describes your age group?

- ☐ Under 18 years old
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+

Q2 What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Q3 Where do you live?

- ☐ Village
- ☐ Town under 20,000
- ☐ Town 20,000 - 100,000
- ☐ City 100,000 - 500,000
- ☐ City 500,000+

Q4 Which of the following best describes your current level of education?

- ☐ Primary education
- ☐ Lower secondary school
- ☐ Vocational course
- ☐ Secondary education
- ☐ College
- ☐ University education
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q5 What is your household's monthly net income (in PLN)?

- ☐ Below 900 PLN
- ☐ 901 - 1250 PLN
- ☐ 1251 - 2000 PLN
- ☐ 2001 - 3000 PLN
- ☐ 3000 PLN +
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Section A: Your attachment to the brand of sports team

Please tick the relevant answer in this section of the questionnaire.

Q1 What is your most favourite global sports team? (please tick one)

- ☐ AC Milan
- ☐ Chicago Bulls
- ☐ FC Barcelona
- ☐ Olympique Marseille
- ☐ Ferrari F1
- ☐ Los Angeles Lakers
- ☐ Liverpool FC
- ☐ Manchester United
- ☐ Paris Saint-Germain
- ☐ Dallas Mavericks
- ☐ Real Madrid
- ☐ Orlando Magic
- ☐ Bordeaux
- ☐ New York Knicks
- ☐ Borussia Dortmund
- ☐ Williams F1
- ☐ Inter
- ☐ McLaren Mercedes
- ☐ Bayern Munich
- ☐ Juventus
- ☐ Other (please specify)

You are now going to be asked a series of questions about the global sports team you selected above.

Section B: Your attitude towards the brand of your favourite team

The questions in this section concern your general attitude towards your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I favour this team over other teams.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 I seek information about the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 I enjoy conversations about the team with friends and relatives.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I enjoy watching the team playing.

1 2 3 4 5

Section C: Players/ drivers

The questions in this section concern the players that are part of your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 This is my favourite team because skilful players (drivers) play an important role in it.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 If my favourite player (driver) in the team left the team, the team would no longer be my favourite.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 This is my favourite team because a player (driver) from my home country plays in it.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 A star player (driver) is the main reason this team is my favourite.

1 2 3 4 5

Section D: Team success

The questions in this section concern the quality of the on-field performance of your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 This is my favourite team because it usually wins games against other teams.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 This is my favourite team because it has won international trophies.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 This is my favourite team because it has won domestic trophies.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 Success on the pitch is what makes me consider this team as my favourite.

1 2 3 4 5

Q5 For me style of performance is more important than the team's success.

1 2 3 4 5

Section E: Engagement through marketing

The questions in this section concern the effectiveness of the marketing activities undertaken by your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 The team communicates well with its fans.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 The team makes an effort to provide attractive products (e.g. sports events, products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise, digital products).

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 The team's products are affordable.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 The team's products are accessible.

1 2 3 4 5

Q5 The team and the team's products are professionally promoted by the team's management.

1 2 3 4 5

Q6 The team's marketing activities engage my attention.

1 2 3 4 5

Q7 The team's marketing activities lead me to purchase.

1 2 3 4 5

Q8 The team's marketing activities make me feel part of the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Section F: Media exposure

The questions in this section concern the media exposure of your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I can regularly find information about the team on TV news.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 I can easily watch games of the team on thematic and satellite TV (non-team-branded channels).

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 I can easily find information about the team on the Internet.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I became a fan of the team because it was often on TV.

1 2 3 4 5

Section G: Brand identity

The questions in this section concern unique associations regarding your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I know what makes my favourite team unique compared to other teams.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 The values of the team are one of the reasons why it is my favourite team.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 I identify with the aims of the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I identify with the ethos (a set of values, norms, behaviours, beliefs) of the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Section H: Product purchase

The questions in this section concern your purchasing behaviour for the products of your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I regularly purchase the products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise (such as clothing, bags, key rings, towels etc.).

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 I regularly purchase the team's digital products (DVDs, mobile phone downloads, including ring tones, logos, wallpapers etc.).

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 I regularly purchase the team's memorabilia (books, photos signed by players, original programmes etc.).

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I intend to purchase the products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise (such as clothing, bags, key rings, towels etc.) in the future.

1 2 3 4 5

Q5 I intend to purchase the team's digital products (DVDs, mobile phone downloads, including ring tones, logos, wallpapers etc.) in the future.

1 2 3 4 5

Q6 I intend to purchase the team's memorabilia (books, photos signed by players, original programmes etc.) in the future.

1 2 3 4 5

Section I: Attendance

The questions in this section concern your attendance (or intention to attend) at games of your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I have attended games of the team in the past.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 I intend to attend future games.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 If I had the opportunity, I would be keen to attend a game of the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I often attend games of the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Section J: Media consumption

The questions in this section concern the ways in which you follow news about your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I regularly watch games of the team on TV.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 I regularly watch TV for news about the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 I follow news about the team (match results, live scores, information about the players/team, etc.) in the daily sport pages and sport magazines.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I like to follow the results of the team online when I am unable to watch games.

1 2 3 4 5

Q5 I regularly connect with the team via its online communication channels (website, Twitter profile, Facebook profile etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

Q6 I regularly participate in the team's online community (through fan forums/chat rooms, online chats with players, fantasy sports etc).

1 2 3 4 5

Section K: Loyalty

The questions in this section concern your loyalty towards your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I consider myself loyal to the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 Regardless of whether they win or lose, I will remain a fan of the team.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 Even if the team was unsuccessful, my loyalty towards it would not change.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I say positive things about the team to other people.

1 2 3 4 5

Section L: Advocacy

The questions in this section concern your readiness to recommend your favourite team brand.

Please choose the most relevant answer using the scale indicated.

1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

Q1 I never miss an opportunity to recommend the team to others.

1 2 3 4 5

Q2 If friends or relatives asked me if it is worth watching a game of my favourite team, I would definitely recommend it.

1 2 3 4 5

Q3 I would recommend the team's digital products to others.

1 2 3 4 5

Q4 I would recommend the team's merchandise to others.

1 2 3 4 5

Further comments

If you want to make further comments in support of your answers, please do so below:

Please tick the following boxes if you wish to be entered into a prize draw or to be contacted for a follow-up interview:

- ☐ I would like my name to be entered into a prize draw to win my favourite team's kit.
- ☐ I would like to be contacted for a follow-up interview.

Contact details

If you agree to be contacted for a follow-up interview or you wish to be entered into a prize draw, please provide your name and email address below.

To ensure the confidentiality of your information, your contact information will be stored separately from the rest of the information you provide. Your survey will be identified by a unique number only.

Name:

Email:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix 4: Follow-up interview schedule

My name is Magdalena Trzcinska and I am a researcher at Coventry University. This interview is one of a series of interviews being carried out while gathering information for research on sports team brands. A global sports team brand is understood as the brand of the team that attracts sports fans worldwide.

I believe that by participating in this interview you will add an in-depth understanding of already collected survey data. As a sports fan you can provide valuable insight into my research by helping me to find out which features of global sports team brands, in your opinion, determine their global status and how fans can contribute to the strength of their favourite global sports team brand.

This interview should take approximately 15 minutes. You will be asked some questions about why you find your favourite global sports team brand appealing and how you demonstrate your attachment to it.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any point during this session.

All of the information you provide is confidential. The information collected will be stored securely and anonymously. Upon conclusion of the research, all data will be destroyed. The results will be written up and presented as part of my thesis.

If you agree, our conversation will be recorded. Could you confirm your agreement in the Informed Consent Form that I emailed you please?

Any questions before we begin?

Part 1: *In the first part of this interview we will discuss your general attitude towards your favourite global sports team brand.*

1. Do you favour this global team over other global teams?
2. Do you seek information about the team?
3. Do you enjoy conversations about your favourite team with friends and relatives?
4. Do you enjoy watching the team playing?

Part 2: *In this part of the interview we will discuss what attracts you towards the brand of your favourite sports team.*

1. The survey that you took indicated that the main determinants of global sports team brands are: **Players/drivers, Engagement through marketing and Brand identity.**

In your experience would you agree that this is accurate? If so, why? If not, what is missing or what should not be found on this list?

2. The survey that you took indicated that of these three determinants, **Engagement through marketing** is the least influential.

In your experience, would you expect that this is accurate? If so, why do you think this is the case? If not, why do you think this is not the case?

3. The survey that you took indicated that of these three determinants **Brand identity** is the most influential.

In your experience, would you expect that this is accurate? If so, why do you think this is the case? If not, why do you think this is not the case?

4. The survey that you took indicated that the increase in the number of **athletes/players** in the global sports team (those who are considered to be sports stars OR who come from Poland OR who are simply fans' favourite athletes) does not lead to the growth in the popularity of this team among Polish fans.

In your experience, would you expect that this is accurate? If so, why do you think this is the case? If not, why do you think this is not the case?

Part 3: *In this part of the interview we will discuss how you demonstrate your attachment to the brand of your favourite global sports team.*

1. The survey that you took indicated that the outcomes for a sports team of having a strong global brand are: **Loyalty, Advocacy, Product purchase, Interaction** and **Media consumption**.

In your experience would you agree that this is accurate? If so, why? If not, what is missing or what should not be found on this list?

2. The survey that you took indicated that **Loyalty** is the most frequently observed outcome of all five.

In your experience, would you expect that this is accurate? If so, why do you think this is the case? If not, why do you think this is not the case?

3. The survey indicated that Polish fans rarely **buy products** of their favourite sports team.

In your experience, would you expect that this is accurate? If so, why do you think this is the case? If not, why do you think this is not the case?

4. Among the issues we discussed is there anything that you felt was missing?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about why you find your favourite global sports team brand appealing and how you demonstrate your attachment to it?

I appreciate the time you took for this interview.

Appendix 5: Demographic profile of survey respondents

Statistics						
		1. "Which of the following best describes your age group?"	2. "What is your gender?"	3. "Where do you live?"	4. "Which of the following best describes your current level of education?"	5. "What is your household's monthly net income (in PLN)?"
N	Valid	614	614	614	605	614
	Missing	0	0	0	9	0
Minimum		2	1	1	1	1
Maximum		6	2	5	6	6

1. "Which of the following best describes your age group?"					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	375	61.1	61.1	61.1
	25-34	184	30.0	30.0	91.0
	35-44	45	7.3	7.3	98.4
	45-54	8	1.3	1.3	99.7
	55-64	2	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

2. "What is your gender?"					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	547	89.1	89.1	89.1
	Female	67	10.9	10.9	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

3. "Where do you live?"					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Village	127	20.7	20.7	20.7
	Town under 20,000	60	9.8	9.8	30.5
	Town 20,000 - 100,000	135	22.0	22.0	52.4
	City 100,000 - 500,000	155	25.2	25.2	77.7
	City 500,000+	137	22.3	22.3	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

4. "Which of the following best describes your current level of education?"					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary education	1	.2	.2	.2
	Lower secondary school	20	3.3	3.3	3.5
	Vocational course	15	2.4	2.5	6.0
	Secondary education	268	43.6	44.3	50.2
	College	34	5.5	5.6	55.9
	University education	267	43.5	44.1	100.0
	Total	605	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	9	1.5		
Total		614	100.0		

5. "What is your household's monthly net income (in PLN)?"					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 900 PLN	23	3.7	3.7	3.7
	901 - 1250 PLN	21	3.4	3.4	7.2

	1251 - 2000 PLN	81	13.2	13.2	20.4
	2001 - 3000 PLN	97	15.8	15.8	36.2
	3000 PLN+	192	31.3	31.3	67.4
	Prefer not to say	200	32.6	32.6	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 6: Favourite global sports teams of survey respondents

6. "What is your most favourite global sports team?" "(please tick one)"					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.	1	.2	.2	.2
	AC Milan	37	6.0	6.0	6.2
	Ajax Amsterdam	1	.2	.2	6.4
	Anwil Wloclawek	1	.2	.2	6.5
	Arsenal FC	20	3.3	3.3	9.8
	AS Roma	2	.3	.3	10.1
	Aston Villa	2	.3	.3	10.4
	Atletico Madryt	1	.2	.2	10.6
	Bayer Leverkusen	1	.2	.2	10.7
	Bayern Munich	24	3.9	3.9	14.7
	Borussia Dortmund	60	9.8	9.8	24.4
	Boston Celtics	4	.7	.7	25.1
	Boston Celtics, FC Barcelona	1	.2	.2	25.2
	Brooklyn Nets	1	.2	.2	25.4
	Chelsea FC	57	9.3	9.3	34.7
	Chicago Bulls	12	2.0	2.0	36.6
	Detroit Pistons	2	.3	.3	37.0
	FC Barcelona	70	11.4	11.4	48.4
	FC Porto	19	3.1	3.1	51.5
	Ferrari F1	9	1.5	1.5	52.9
	Houston Rockets	1	.2	.2	53.1
	Indiana Pacers	1	.2	.2	53.3
	Infiniti Red Bull Racing	3	.5	.5	53.7
	Inter	20	3.3	3.3	57.0
	Juventus	60	9.8	9.8	66.8
	KSZO Ostrowiec	3	.5	.5	67.3
	Legia Warszawa	2	.3	.3	67.6
	Liverpool FC	10	1.6	1.6	69.2
	Los Angeles Lakers	5	.8	.8	70.0
	Lotus F1 Team	1	.2	.2	70.2
	Manchester City FC	1	.2	.2	70.4
	Manchester United	64	10.4	10.4	80.8
	McLaren-Mercedes	2	.3	.3	81.1
	Miami Heat	1	.2	.2	81.3
	Minnesota Timberwolves	1	.2	.2	81.4
	New Orlean Pelicans	1	.2	.2	81.6
	New York Knicks	2	.3	.3	81.9

	Newcastle United FC	7	1.1	1.1	83.1
	Olympique Marseille	7	1.1	1.1	84.2
	Orlando Magic	6	1.0	1.0	85.2
	Paris Saint-Germain	6	1.0	1.0	86.2
	Philadelphia 76ERS	1	.2	.2	86.3
	Portland Trail Blazers	2	.3	.3	86.6
	Real Madryt	53	8.6	8.6	95.3
	San Antonio Spurs	5	.8	.8	96.1
	Seattle SuperSonics	1	.2	.2	96.3
	Skra Belchatow	1	.2	.2	96.4
	Southampton FC	2	.3	.3	96.7
	Spartak Moskwa	1	.2	.2	96.9
	Tottenham Hotspur	2	.3	.3	97.2
	Vive Targi Kielce	2	.3	.3	97.6
	West Ham United	14	2.3	2.3	99.8
	Williams F1	1	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 7: Differences in demographics between basketball, football and Formula 1 fans

Variables	Categories	Football	Basketball	Formula 1	Combined
Gender	Male	485 (79.5%) ¹²	48 (7.9%)	12 (2.0%)	545 (89.3%)
	Female	61 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (0.7%)	65 (10.7%)
	Total	546 (89.5%)	48 (7.9%)	16 (2.6%)	610 ¹³ (100.0%)
Age	18–24	341 (55.9%)	21 (3.4%)	12 (2.0%)	374 (61.3%)
	25–34	156 (25.6%)	22 (3.6%)	4 (0.7%)	182 (29.8%)
	35–44	39 (6.4%)	5 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	44 (7.2%)
	45–54	8 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (1.3%)
	55–64	2 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.3%)
	65+	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	Total	546 (89.5%)	48 (7.9%)	16 (2.6%)	610 (100.0%)
Place of residence	Village	121 (19.8%)	4 (0.7%)	2 (0.3%)	127 (20.8%)
	Town under 20,000	52 (8.5%)	6 (1.0%)	2 (0.3%)	60 (9.8%)
	Town 20,000–100,000	123 (20.2%)	8 (1.3%)	4 (0.7%)	135 (22.1%)
	City 100,000–500,000	136 (22.3%)	13 (2.1%)	4 (0.7%)	153 (25.1%)
	City 500,000+	114 (18.7%)	17 (2.8%)	4 (0.7%)	135 (22.1%)
	Total	546 (89.5%)	48 (7.9%)	16 (2.6%)	610 (100.0%)
Education	Primary education	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)
	Lower secondary school	16 (2.6%)	2 (0.3%)	2 (0.3%)	20 (3.3%)
	Vocational course	12 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.5%)	15 (2.5%)
	Secondary education	243 (39.8%)	19 (3.1%)	6 (1.0%)	268 (43.9%)
	College	32 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	33 (5.4%)
	University	234 (38.4%)	26 (4.3%)	4 (0.7%)	264 (43.3%)
	Other	8 (1.3%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (1.5%)
	Total	546 (89.5%)	48 (7.9%)	16 (2.6%)	610 (100.0%)

¹² All percentages were rounded to one decimal place up/down.

¹³ While the whole sample size was 614, 610 fans declared supporting either football or basketball or Formula 1 teams. Four remaining respondents did not select a team from any of these three sports.

Appendix 8: Descriptive statistics (1)

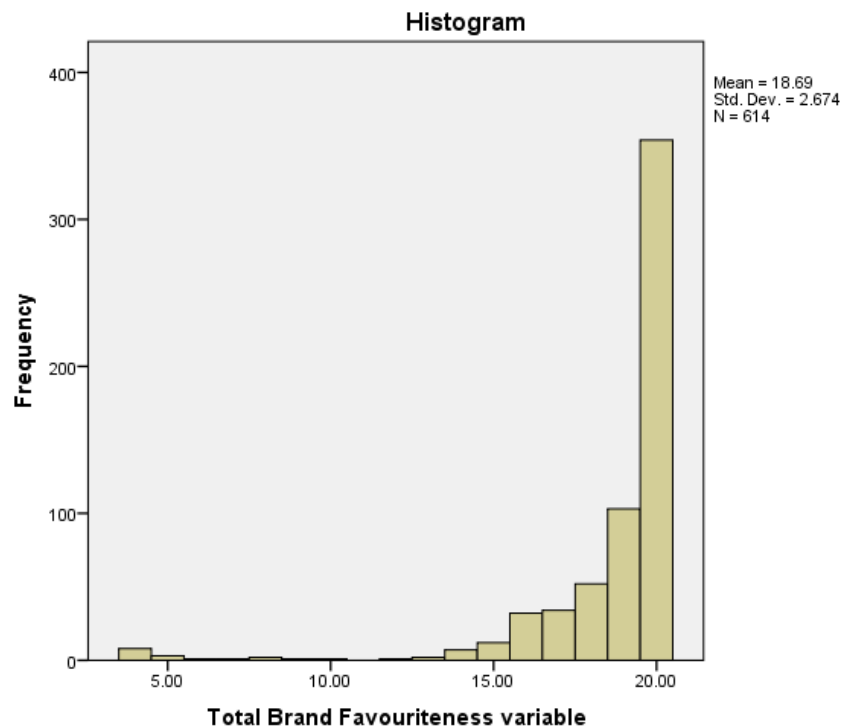
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Variance	Range
Total Brand Favouriteness	614	4.00	20.00	18.6873	20.0000	20.00	2.67365	7.148	16.00
Total Players	614	6.00	20.00	11.6938	12.0000	12.00	2.02611	4.105	14.00
Total Team Success	614	5.00	25.00	13.7704	13.0000	9.00	4.70025	22.092	20.00
Total Engagement Through Marketing	614	8.00	40.00	28.4951	28.0000	27.00	5.18680	26.903	32.00
Total Media Exposure	614	4.00	20.00	14.3876	15.0000	16.00	3.24772	10.548	16.00
Total Brand Identity	614	4.00	20.00	17.2590	18.0000	20.00	2.82607	7.987	16.00
Total Product Purchase	614	6.00	30.00	17.0472	17.0000	18.00	5.40039	29.164	24.00
Total Attendance	614	5.00	20.00	12.8062	12.0000	12.00	2.64604	7.002	15.00
Total Media Consumption	614	6.00	30.00	25.5700	27.0000	30.00	4.54028	20.614	24.00
Total Loyalty	614	4.00	20.00	18.9153	20.0000	20.00	2.10940	4.450	16.00
Total Advocacy	614	4.00	20.00	15.2508	16.0000	16.00	3.33731	11.138	16.00

Appendix 9: Descriptive statistics (2)

a. Total Brand Favouriteness variable

Descriptives

			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Brand Favouriteness variable	Mean		18.6873	.10790
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	18.4754	
		Upper Bound	18.8992	
	5% Trimmed Mean		19.1341	
	Median		20.0000	
	Variance		7.148	
	Std. Deviation		2.67365	
	Minimum		4.00	
	Maximum		20.00	
	Range		16.00	
	Interquartile Range		2.00	
	Skewness		-3.654	.099
	Kurtosis		15.536	.197

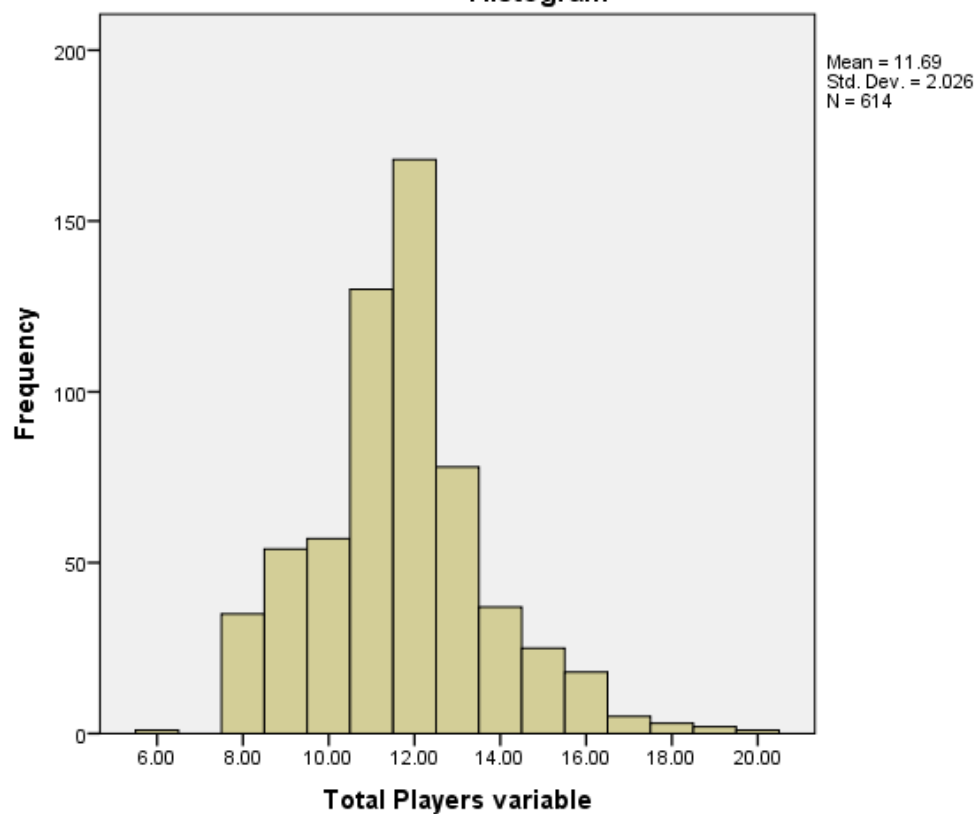


b. Total Players variable

Descriptives

		Statistic	Std. Error
Total Players variable	Mean	11.6938	.08177
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	11.5332
		Upper Bound	11.8544
	5% Trimmed Mean	11.6285	
	Median	12.0000	
	Variance	4.105	
	Std. Deviation	2.02611	
	Minimum	6.00	
	Maximum	20.00	
	Range	14.00	
	Interquartile Range	2.00	
	Skewness	.492	.099
	Kurtosis	.947	.197

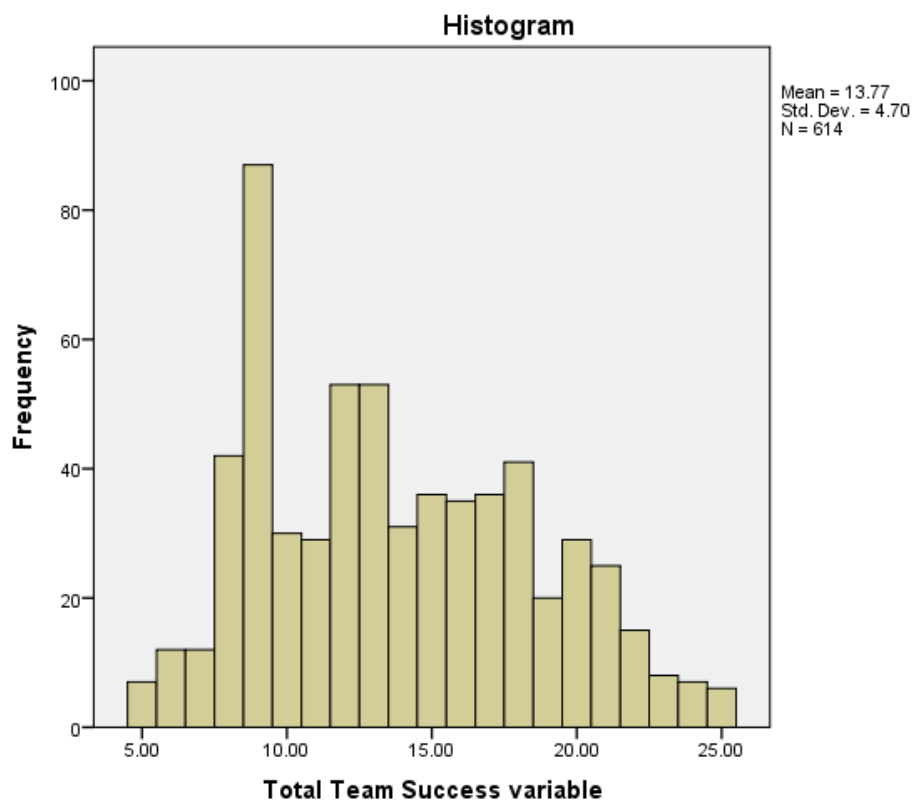
Histogram



c. **Total Team Success variable**

Descriptives

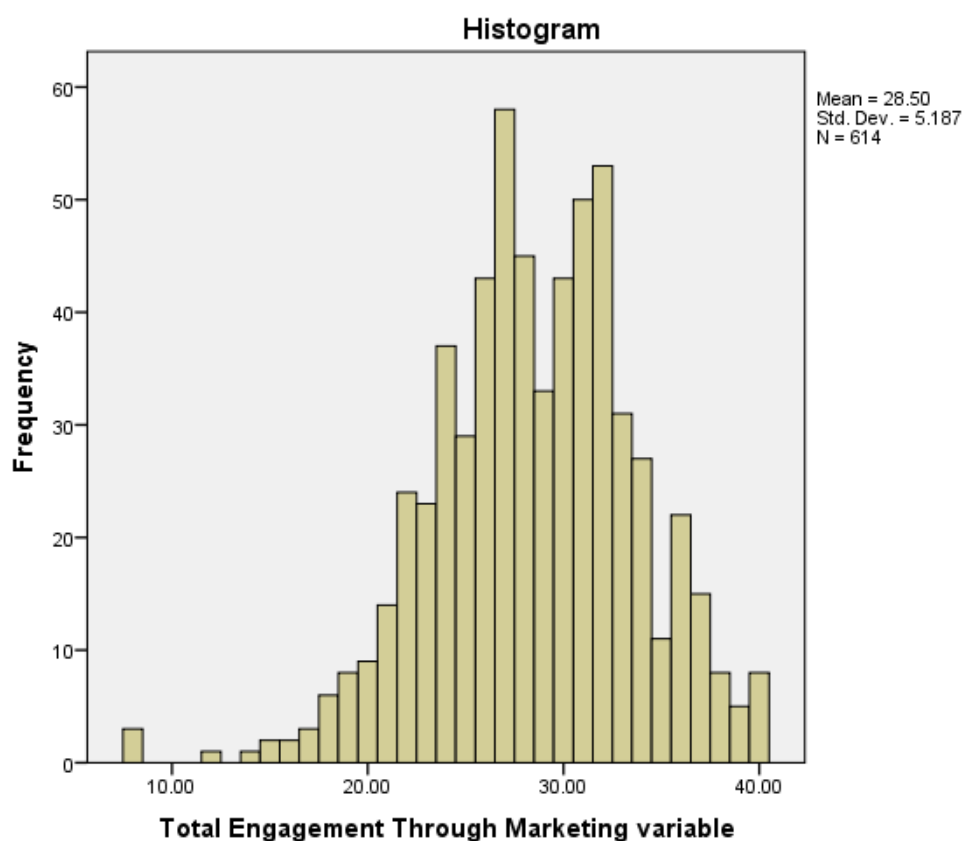
			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Team Success variable	Mean		13.7704	.18969
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	13.3978	
		Upper Bound	14.1429	
	5% Trimmed Mean		13.6640	
	Median		13.0000	
	Variance		22.092	
	Std. Deviation		4.70025	
	Minimum		5.00	
	Maximum		25.00	
	Range		20.00	
	Interquartile Range		8.00	
	Skewness		.325	.099
	Kurtosis		-.807	.197



d. Total Engagement Through Marketing variable

Descriptives

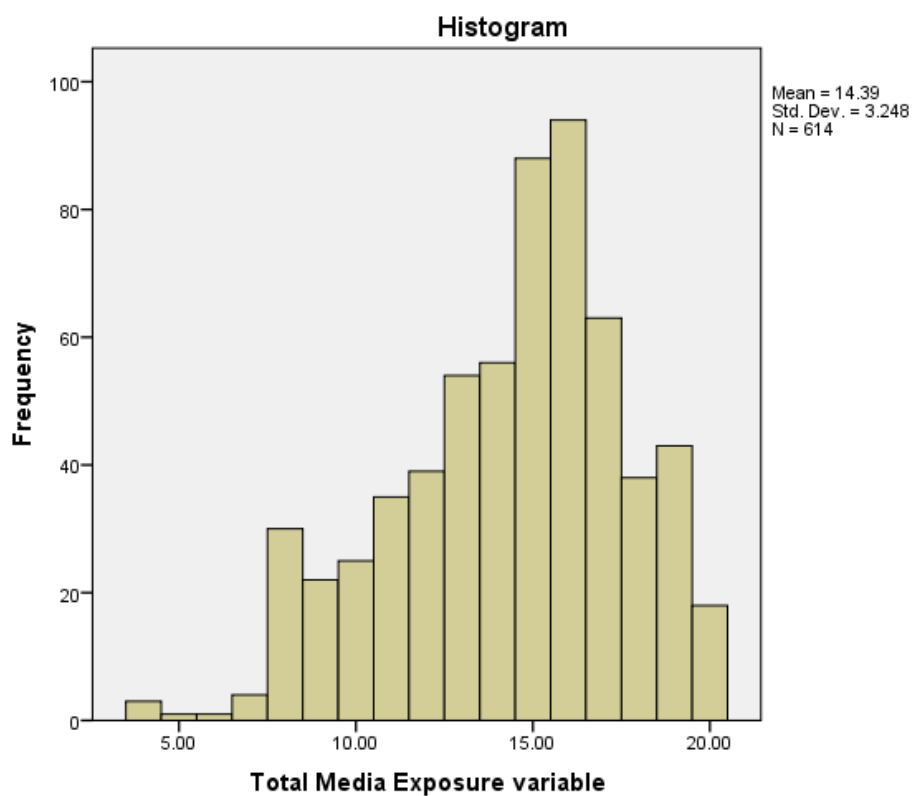
			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Engagement Through Marketing variable	Mean		28.4951	.20932
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	28.0840	
		Upper Bound	28.9062	
	5% Trimmed Mean		28.5941	
	Median		28.0000	
	Variance		26.903	
	Std. Deviation		5.18680	
	Minimum		8.00	
	Maximum		40.00	
	Range		32.00	
	Interquartile Range		7.00	
	Skewness		-.362	.099
	Kurtosis		.652	.197



e. Total Media Exposure variable

Descriptives

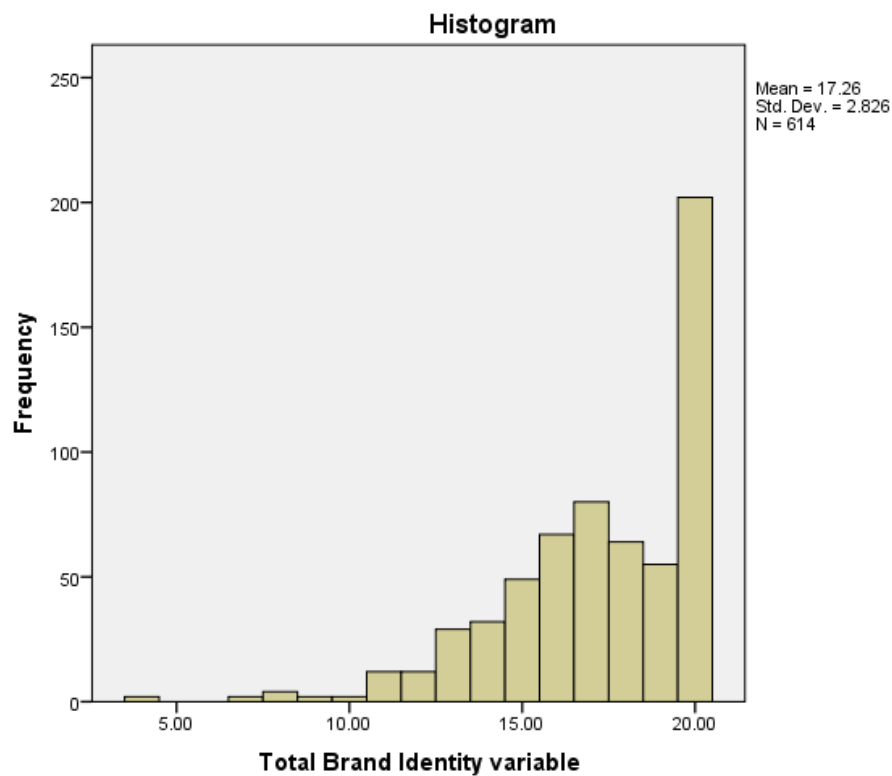
			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Media Exposure variable	Mean		14.3876	.13107
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	14.1302	
		Upper Bound	14.6450	
	5% Trimmed Mean		14.4917	
	Median		15.0000	
	Variance		10.548	
	Std. Deviation		3.24772	
	Minimum		4.00	
	Maximum		20.00	
	Range		16.00	
	Interquartile Range		5.00	
	Skewness		-.529	.099
	Kurtosis		-.190	.197



f. **Total Brand Identity variable**

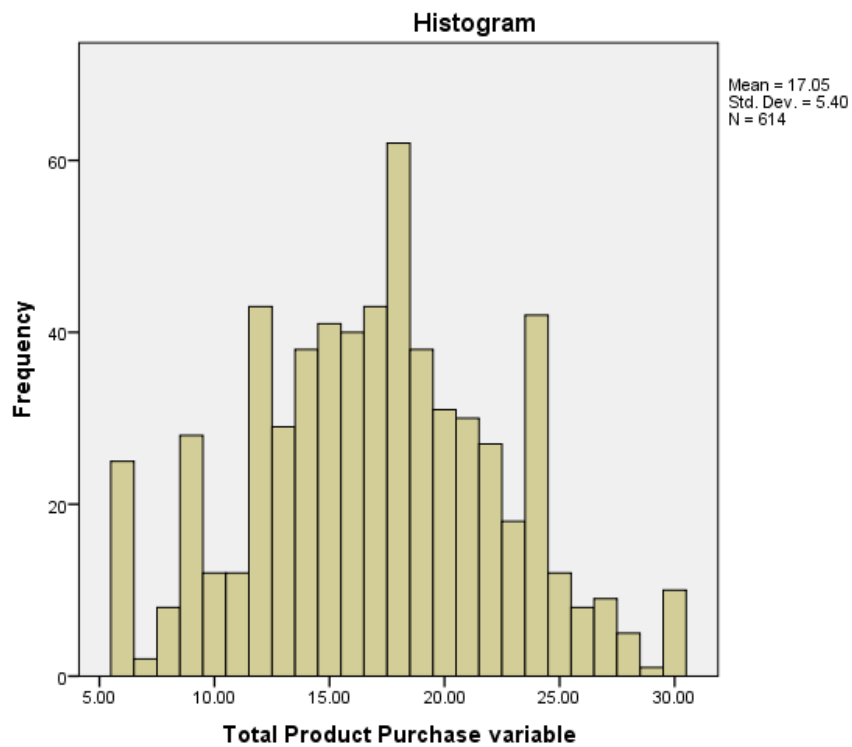
Descriptives

			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Brand Identity variable	Mean		17.2590	.11405
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	17.0350	
		Upper Bound	17.4829	
	5% Trimmed Mean		17.5147	
	Median		18.0000	
	Variance		7.987	
	Std. Deviation		2.82607	
	Minimum		4.00	
	Maximum		20.00	
	Range		16.00	
	Interquartile Range		4.00	
	Skewness		-1.171	.099
	Kurtosis		1.694	.197



g. Total Product Purchase variable

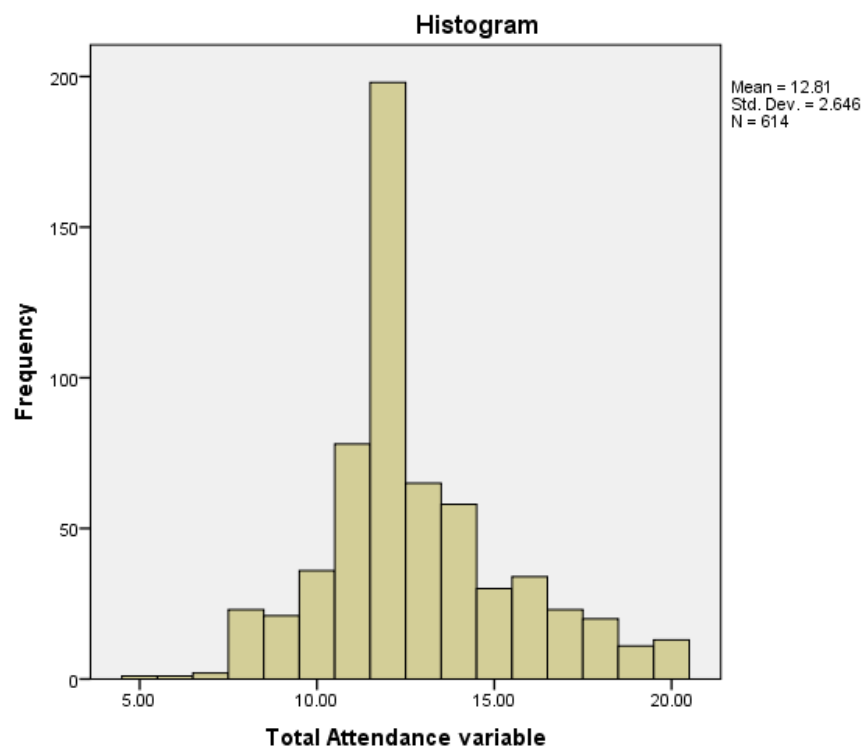
Descriptives			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Product Purchase variable	Mean		17.0472	.21794
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	16.6192	
		Upper Bound	17.4752	
	5% Trimmed Mean		17.0344	
	Median		17.0000	
	Variance		29.164	
	Std. Deviation		5.40039	
	Minimum		6.00	
	Maximum		30.00	
	Range		24.00	
	Interquartile Range		8.00	
	Skewness		.029	.099
	Kurtosis		-.385	.197



h. Total Attendance variable

Descriptives

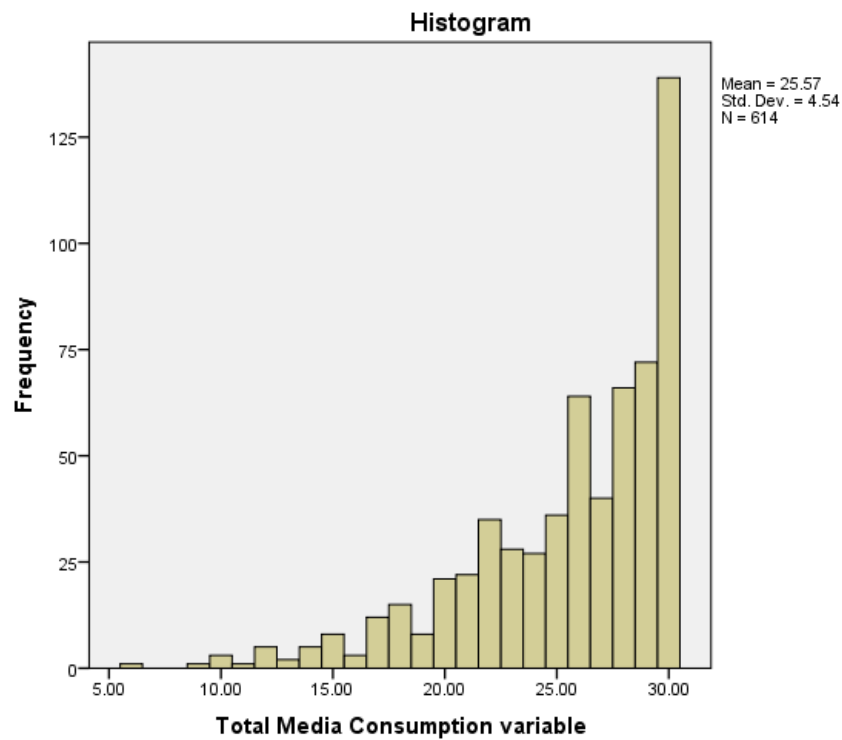
			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Attendance variable	Mean		12.8062	.10679
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	12.5965	
		Upper Bound	13.0159	
	5% Trimmed Mean		12.7237	
	Median		12.0000	
	Variance		7.002	
	Std. Deviation		2.64604	
	Minimum		5.00	
	Maximum		20.00	
	Range		15.00	
	Interquartile Range		3.00	
	Skewness		.638	.099
	Kurtosis		.513	.197



i. **Total Media Consumption variable**

Descriptives

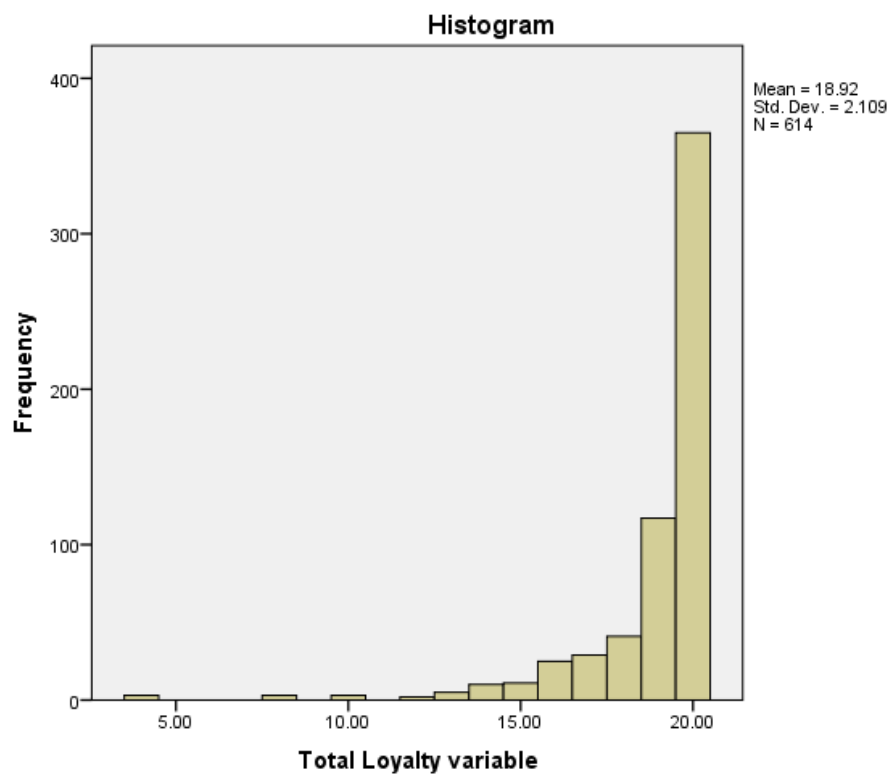
			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Media Consumption variable	Mean		25.5700	.18323
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	25.2102	
		Upper Bound	25.9299	
	5% Trimmed Mean		26.0045	
	Median		27.0000	
	Variance		20.614	
	Std. Deviation		4.54028	
	Minimum		6.00	
	Maximum		30.00	
	Range		24.00	
	Interquartile Range		6.00	
	Skewness		-1.240	.099
	Kurtosis		1.286	.197



j. **Total Loyalty variable**

Descriptives

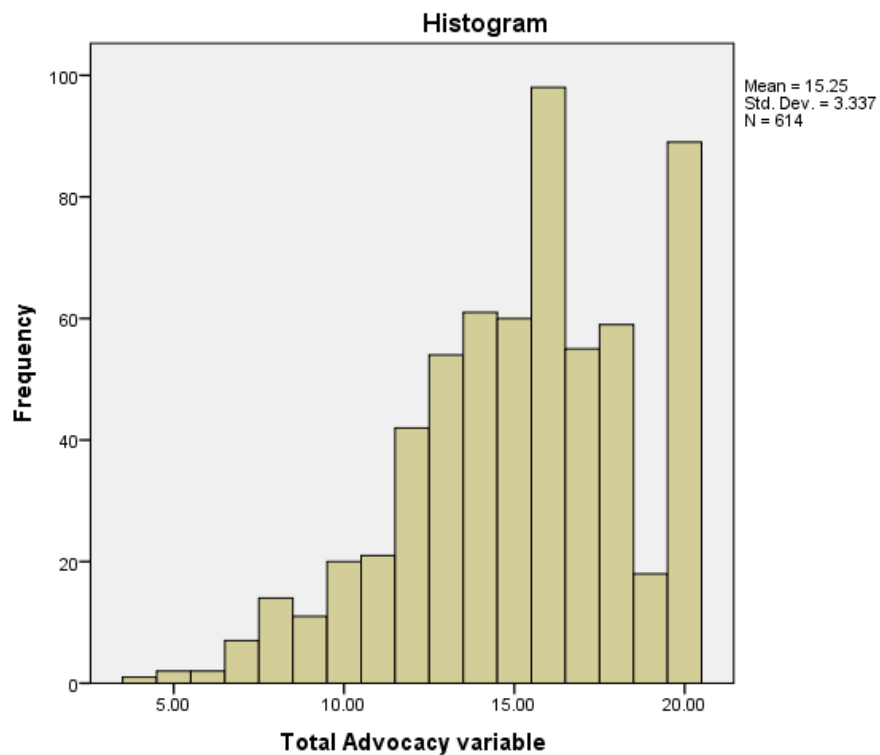
			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Loyalty variable	Mean		18.9153	.08513
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	18.7481	
		Upper Bound	19.0825	
	5% Trimmed Mean		19.2445	
	Median		20.0000	
	Variance		4.450	
	Std. Deviation		2.10940	
	Minimum		4.00	
	Maximum		20.00	
	Range		16.00	
	Interquartile Range		1.00	
	Skewness		-3.473	.099
	Kurtosis		16.277	.197



k. **Total Advocacy variable**

Descriptives

			Statistic	Std. Error
Total Advocacy variable	Mean		15.2508	.13468
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	14.9863	
		Upper Bound	15.5153	
	5% Trimmed Mean		15.4193	
	Median		16.0000	
	Variance		11.138	
	Std. Deviation		3.33731	
	Minimum		4.00	
	Maximum		20.00	
	Range		16.00	
	Interquartile Range		5.00	
	Skewness		-.518	.099
	Kurtosis		-.070	.197



Appendix 10: Summary of the results of factor analyses

a. Factor analysis for brand favouriteness antecedents

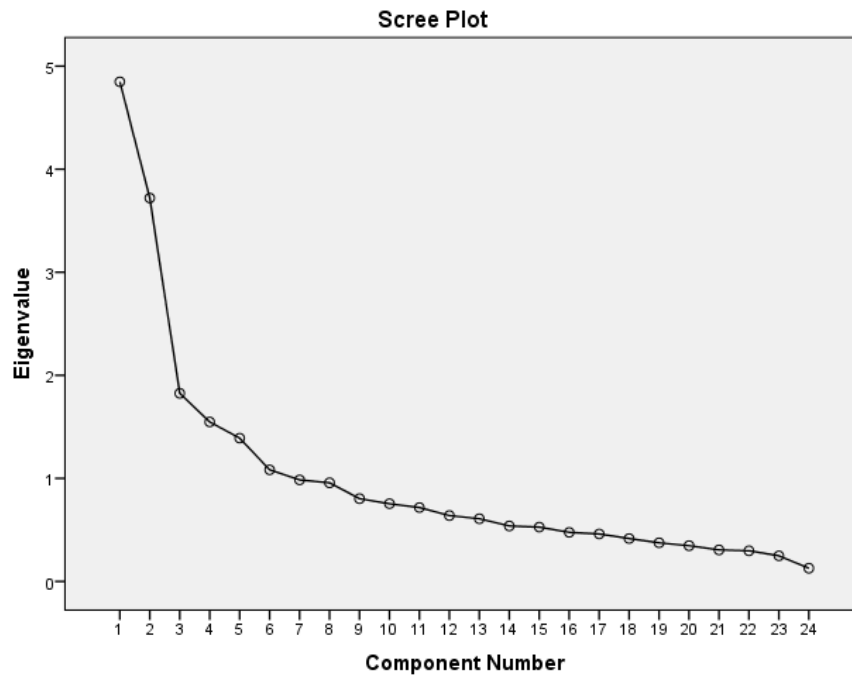
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.828
Approx. Chi-Square	5456.556
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity df	276
Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.848	20.202	20.202	4.848	20.202	20.202
2	3.720	15.501	35.703	3.720	15.501	35.703
3	1.825	7.605	43.308	1.825	7.605	43.308
4	1.547	6.447	49.755	1.547	6.447	49.755
5	1.390	5.793	55.548	1.390	5.793	55.548
6	1.083	4.512	60.060	1.083	4.512	60.060
7	.986	4.107	64.167			
8	.957	3.989	68.156			
9	.803	3.348	71.503			
10	.754	3.142	74.645			
11	.717	2.987	77.632			
12	.639	2.663	80.295			
13	.608	2.535	82.829			
14	.538	2.243	85.072			
15	.527	2.197	87.270			
16	.477	1.985	89.255			
17	.461	1.920	91.175			
18	.416	1.732	92.907			
19	.375	1.562	94.470			
20	.347	1.445	95.915			
21	.306	1.275	97.190			
22	.298	1.240	98.430			
23	.248	1.035	99.465			
24	.128	.535	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



Pattern Matrix ^a					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
21. "The team makes an effort to provide attractive products (e.g. sports events, products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise, digital products)."	.797				
24. "The team and the team's products are professionally promoted by the club. "	.778				
25. "The team's marketing activities engage my attention."	.650				
20. "The team communicates well with its fans."	.627				
30. "I can easily find information about the team on the Internet."	.391				
17. "This is my favourite team because it has won domestic trophies."		.932			
16. "This is my favourite team because it has won international trophies."		.923			
18. "Success on the pitch is what makes me consider this team as my favourite."		.841			
15. "This is my favourite team because it usually wins games against other teams."		.809			
12. "If my favourite player in the team left the team, the team would no longer be my favourite."			.735		
13. "This is my favourite team because a player from my home country plays in it."			.717		
14. "A star player is the main reason this team is my favourite."			.638		
35. "I identify with the ethos of the team."				.870	
34. "I identify with the aims of the team."				.843	
33. "The values of the team are one of the reasons why it is my favourite team."				.814	
32. "I know what makes my favourite team unique compared to other teams."				.610	
28. "I can regularly find information about the team on TV news."					.778

29. "I can easily watch games of the team on thematic and satellite TV (non-club channels)."					.763
31. "I became a fan of the team because it was often on TV."					.609

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 13 iterations.

Structure Matrix					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
21. "The team makes an effort to provide attractive products (e.g. sports events, products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise, digital products)."	.806			.336	
24. "The team and the team's products are professionally promoted by the club. "	.804			.319	
25. "The team's marketing activities engage my attention."	.672				
20. "The team communicates well with its fans."	.664			.406	
30. "I can easily find information about the team on the Internet."	.470				.357
17. "This is my favourite team because it has won domestic trophies."		.917			
16. "This is my favourite team because it has won international trophies."		.920			
18. "Success on the pitch is what makes me consider this team as my favourite."		.848			
15. "This is my favourite team because it usually wins games against other teams."		.840	.301		
12. "If my favourite player in the team left the team, the team would no longer be my favourite."			.745		
13. "This is my favourite team because a player from my home country plays in it."			.724		
14. "A star player is the main reason this team is my favourite."		.348	.688		
35. "I identify with the ethos of the team."	.305			.859	
34. "I identify with the aims of the team."				.824	
33. "The values of the team are one of the reasons why it is my favourite team."				.813	
32. "I know what makes my favourite team unique compared to other teams."	.339			.673	
28. "I can regularly find information about the team on TV news."					.785
29. "I can easily watch games of the team on thematic and satellite TV (non-club channels)."					.778
31. "I became a fan of the team because it was often on TV."		.316			.575

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Component Correlation Matrix

Component	1	2	3	4	5
1	1.000	.035	-.026	.363	.282
2	.035	1.000	.164	-.040	.135
3	-.026	.164	1.000	-.065	.036
4	.363	-.040	-.065	1.000	.140
5	.282	.135	.036	.140	1.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

b. Factor analysis for brand favouriteness outcomes

KMO and Bartlett's Test

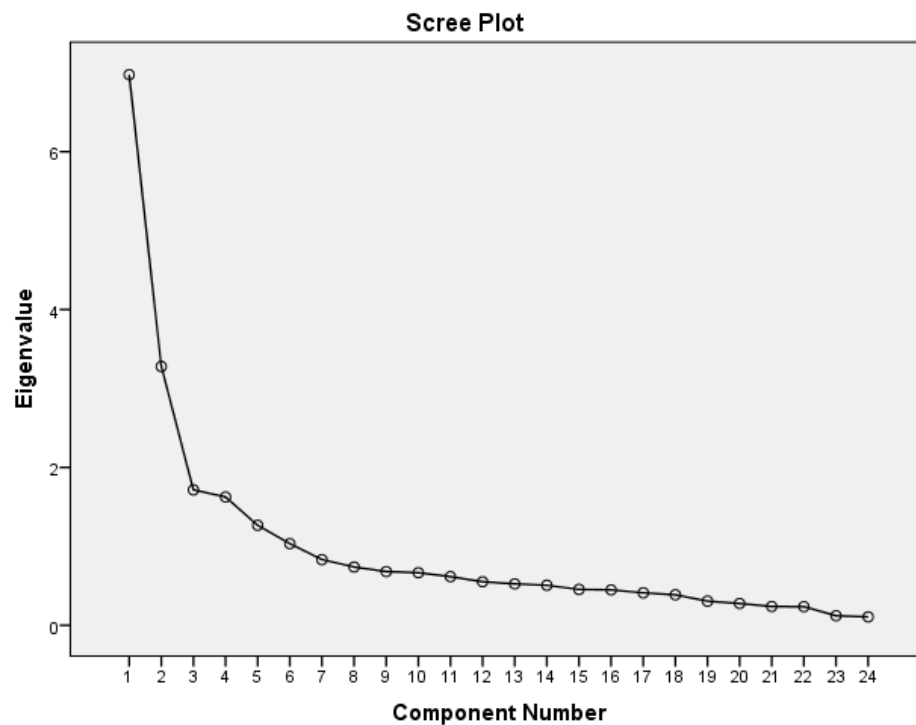
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.853
Approx. Chi-Square	7477.974
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df
	276
Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.976	29.066	29.066	6.976	29.066	29.066
	3.278	13.660				42.726
	1.716	7.148				49.874
	1.626	6.774				56.648
	1.266	5.276				61.924
	1.034	4.309				66.233
	.832	3.467				
	.739	3.078				
	.681	2.838				
	.666	2.776				
	.616	2.565				
	.552	2.298				
	.525	2.187				
	.508	2.115				
	.455	1.894				
16	.448	1.868	91.318			

17	.412	1.715	93.033		
18	.387	1.611	94.644		
19	.306	1.276	95.920		
20	.277	1.152	97.072		
21	.239	.994	98.066		
22	.236	.985	99.051		
23	.121	.504	99.555		
24	.107	.445	100.000		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



Pattern Matrix ^a					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
54. "Even if the team was unsuccessful, my loyalty towards it would not change."	.952				
53. "Regardless of whether they win or lose, I will remain a fan of the team."	.949				
52. "I consider myself loyal to the team."	.729				
44. "If I had the opportunity, I would be keen to attend a game of the team."	.642				
40. "I intend to purchase the team's digital products in the future."		.810			
41. "I intend to purchase the team's memorabilia in the future."		.733			
37. "I regularly purchase the team's digital products (DVDs, mobile phone downloads, including ring tones, logos, wallpapers etc.)."		.711			

38. "I regularly purchase the team's memorabilia (books, photos signed by players, original programmes etc.)."		.639			
36. "I regularly purchase the products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise (such as clothing, bags, key rings, towels etc.)."		.480			
47. "I regularly watch TV for news about the team."			.824		
48. "I follow news about the team (match results, live scores, information about the players/club etc.) in the daily sport pages and sport magazines."			.751		
46. "I regularly watch games of the team on TV."			.707		
59. "I would recommend the team's merchandise to others."				.791	
58. "I would recommend the team's digital products to others."				.781	
56. "I never miss an opportunity to recommend the team to others."				.699	
50. "I regularly connect with the team via its online communication channels (website, Twitter profile, Facebook profile etc.). "					- .664
51. "I regularly participate in the team's online community (through fan forums/chat rooms, online chats with players, fantasy sports etc)."					- .661
43. "I intend to attend future games."					- .573

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

Structure Matrix					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
54. "Even if the team was unsuccessful, my loyalty towards it would not change."	.912				
53. "Regardless of whether they win or lose, I will remain a fan of the team."	.909				
52. "I consider myself loyal to the team."	.796				- .441
44. "If I had the opportunity, I would be keen to attend a game of the team."	.709				- .339
40. "I intend to purchase the team's digital products in the future."		.801		.334	
41. "I intend to purchase the team's memorabilia in the future."		.752			- .474
37. "I regularly purchase the team's digital products (DVDs, mobile phone downloads, including ring tones, logos, wallpapers etc.)."		.743		.376	
38. "I regularly purchase the team's memorabilia (books, photos signed by players, original programmes etc.)."		.736		.335	
36. "I regularly purchase the products promoting the team, i.e. merchandise (such as clothing, bags, key rings, towels etc.)."		.651		.455	- .300
47. "I regularly watch TV for news about the team."			.823		

48. "I follow news about the team (match results, live scores, information about the players/club etc.) in the daily sport pages and sport magazines."			.768		
46. "I regularly watch games of the team on TV."	.358		.752		- .356
59. "I would recommend the team's merchandise to others."		.488		.856	
58. "I would recommend the team's digital products to others."		.507		.846	
56. "I never miss an opportunity to recommend the team to others."	.389			.733	
50. "I regularly connect with the team via its online communication channels (website, Twitter profile, Facebook profile etc.)."			.367		- .697
51. "I regularly participate in the team's online community (through fan forums/chat rooms, online chats with players, fantasy sports etc)."	.357			.320	- .724
43. "I intend to attend future games."	.379	.320			- .666

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Component Correlation Matrix

Component	1	2	3	4	5
1	1.000	.093	.282	.249	-.379
2	.093	1.000	.102	.352	-.240
3	.282	.102	1.000	.247	-.194
4	.249	.352	.247	1.000	-.190
5	-.379	-.240	-.194	-.190	1.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

c. Factor analysis for brand favouriteness

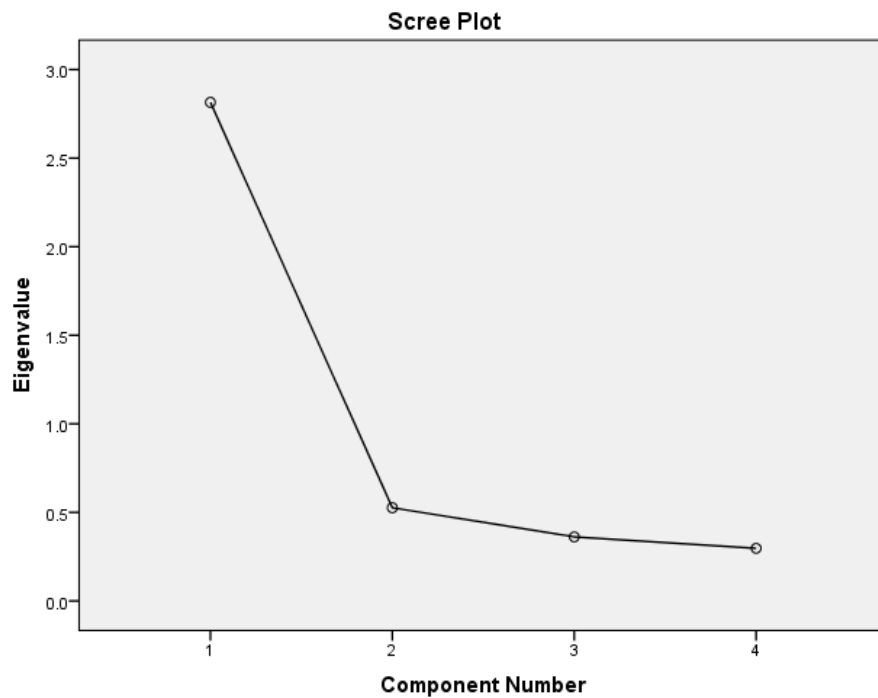
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.808
Approx. Chi-Square		1122.508
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	6
Sig.		.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.815	70.375	70.375	2.815	70.375	70.375
2	.526	13.153	83.528			
3	.362	9.043	92.571			
4	.297	7.429	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



Component Matrix^a

	Component
	1
10. "I enjoy watching the team playing."	.878
8. "I seek information about the team."	.855
7. "I favour this team over other teams."	.830
9. "I enjoy conversations about the team with friends and relatives."	.790

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Appendix 11: Summary of bootstrap simple linear regressions

a. Simple linear regression between brand favouriteness and product purchase

Correlations					
Pearson Correlation			F_Product_purchase	F_Product_purchase	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.128
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Product_purchase	.128
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)			F_Product_purchase	F_Product_purchase	.
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.001
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Product_purchase	.001
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.
N			F_Product_purchase	F_Product_purchase	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Product_purchase	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
Bootstrap for Pearson Correlation ^a	Bias		F_Product_purchase	F_Product_purchase	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.003
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Product_purchase	.003
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	Std. Error		F_Product_purchase	F_Product_purchase	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.048
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Product_purchase	.048
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	F_Product_purchase	F_Product_purchase	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.040
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Product_purchase	.040
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
		Upper	F_Product_purchase	F_Product_purchase	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.224
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Product_purchase	.224
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples					

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.128 ^a	.016	.015	.92277

a. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

b. Dependent Variable: F_Product_purchase

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	8.732	1	8.732	10.255	.001 ^b
Residual	521.119	612	.852		
Total	529.851	613			

a. Dependent Variable: F_Product_purchase

b. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.839	.263		6.988	.000	1.322	2.356					
F_Brand_favouriteness	.179	.056	.128	3.202	.001	.069	.288	.128	.128	.128	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: F_Product_purchase

Bootstrap for Coefficients

Model	B	Bootstrap ^a				
		Bias	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
1 (Constant)	1.839	-.038	.362	.001	1.035	2.420
F_Brand_favouriteness	.179	.008	.076	.015	.051	.347

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

b. Simple linear regression between brand favouriteness and media consumption

Correlations			
Pearson Correlation	F_Media_consumption	F_Media_consumption	1.000
		F_Brand_favouriteness	.286
	F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Media_consumption	.286
		F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	F_Media_consumption	F_Media_consumption	.
		F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Media_consumption	.000

				F_Brand_favouriteness	.
N	F_Media_consumption			F_Media_consumption	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
	F_Brand_favouriteness			F_Media_consumption	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
Bootstrap for Pearson Correlation ^a	Bias	F_Media_consumption		F_Media_consumption	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
		F_Brand_favouriteness		F_Media_consumption	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	Std. Error	F_Media_consumption		F_Media_consumption	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.058
		F_Brand_favouriteness		F_Media_consumption	.058
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	F_Media_consumption	F_Media_consumption	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.174
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Media_consumption	.174
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
		Upper	F_Media_consumption	F_Media_consumption	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.399
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Media_consumption	.399
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.286 ^a	.082	.080	.92625

a. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

b. Dependent Variable: F_Media_consumption

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	46.897	1	46.897	54.663	.000 ^b
Residual	525.053	612	.858		
Total	571.950	613			

a. Dependent Variable: F_Media_consumption

b. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.305	.264		8.725	.000	1.786	2.823					
1 F_Brand_favouriteness	.414	.056	.286	7.393	.000	.304	.524	.286	.286	.286	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: F_Media_consumption

Bootstrap for Coefficients

Model	B	Bootstrap ^a				
		Bias	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	2.305	-.021	.457	.001	1.361	3.153
1 F_Brand_favouriteness	.414	.005	.095	.001	.240	.614

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

c. Simple linear regression between brand favouriteness and loyalty

Correlations				
Pearson Correlation	F_Loyalty	F_Loyalty		1.000
		F_Brand_favouriteness		.558
	F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Loyalty		.558
		F_Brand_favouriteness		1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	F_Loyalty	F_Loyalty		.
		F_Brand_favouriteness		.000
	F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Loyalty		.000
		F_Brand_favouriteness		.
N	F_Loyalty	F_Loyalty		614
		F_Brand_favouriteness		614
	F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Loyalty		614
		F_Brand_favouriteness		614
Bootstrap for Pearson Correlation ^a	F_Loyalty	F_Loyalty		.000
		F_Brand_favouriteness		-.002
	F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Loyalty		-.002
		F_Brand_favouriteness		.000

	Std. Error		F_Loyalty	F_Loyalty	.000
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Brand_favouriteness	.077
				F_Loyalty	.077
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	F_Loyalty	F_Loyalty	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.394
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Loyalty	.394
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
		Upper	F_Loyalty	F_Loyalty	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.697
F_Brand_favouriteness			F_Loyalty	.697	
			F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000	

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.558 ^a	.312	.311	.40152

a. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

b. Dependent Variable: F_Loyalty

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	44.723	1	44.723	277.411	.000 ^b
Residual	98.665	612	.161		
Total	143.388	613			

a. Dependent Variable: F_Loyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.900	.115		25.323	.000	2.675	3.124					
1 F_Brand_fav ouriteness	.404	.024	.558	16.656	.000	.356	.452	.558	.558	.558	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: F_Loyalty

Bootstrap for Coefficients

Model	B	Bootstrap ^a				
		Bias	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
1 (Constant)	2.900	-.022	.394	.001	2.093	3.682
F_Brand_favouriteness	.404	.004	.082	.001	.242	.571

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

d. Simple linear regression between brand favouriteness and advocacy

Correlations					
Pearson Correlation			F_Advocacy	F_Advocacy	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.228
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Advocacy	.228
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)			F_Advocacy	F_Advocacy	.
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Advocacy	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.
N			F_Advocacy	F_Advocacy	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Advocacy	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
Bootstrap for Pearson Correlation ^a	Bias		F_Advocacy	F_Advocacy	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.002
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Advocacy	.002
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	Std. Error		F_Advocacy	F_Advocacy	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.051
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Advocacy	.051
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	F_Advocacy	F_Advocacy	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.131
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Advocacy	.131
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
		Upper	F_Advocacy	F_Advocacy	1.000
				F Brand favouriteness	.327

			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Advocacy	.327
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples					

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.228 ^a	.052	.050	.95747

a. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

b. Dependent Variable: F_Advocacy

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.637	1	30.637	33.419	.000 ^b
	Residual	561.049	612	.917		
	Total	591.686	613			

a. Dependent Variable: F_Advocacy

b. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.985	.273		7.269	.000	1.448	2.521					
1 F_Brand_favouriteness	.334	.058	.228	5.781	.000	.221	.448	.228	.228	.228	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: F_Advocacy

Bootstrap for Coefficients

Model	B	Bootstrap ^a				
		Bias	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	1.985	-.035	.414	.001	1.068	2.695
1 F_Brand_favouriteness	.334	.007	.087	.001	.187	.524

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

e. Simple linear regression between brand favouriteness and interaction

Correlations					
Pearson Correlation			F_Interaction	F_Interaction	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.346
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Interaction	.346
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)			F_Interaction	F_Interaction	.
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Interaction	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.
N			F_Interaction	F_Interaction	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Interaction	614
				F_Brand_favouriteness	614
Bootstrap for Pearson Correlation ^a	Bias		F_Interaction	F_Interaction	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	-.001
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Interaction	-.001
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	Std. Error		F_Interaction	F_Interaction	.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.057
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Interaction	.057
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.000
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	F_Interaction	F_Interaction	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.241
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Interaction	.241
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
		Upper	F_Interaction	F_Interaction	1.000
				F_Brand_favouriteness	.460
			F_Brand_favouriteness	F_Interaction	.460
				F_Brand_favouriteness	1.000
a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples					

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.346 ^a	.120	.118	.86232

a. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

b. Dependent Variable: F_Interaction

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	61.940	1	61.940	83.297	.000 ^b
Residual	455.085	612	.744		
Total	517.025	613			

a. Dependent Variable: F_Interaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), F_Brand_favouriteness

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.938	.246		7.880	.000	1.455	2.421					
F_Brand_favouriteness	.476	.052	.346	9.127	.000	.373	.578	.346	.346	.346	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: F_Interaction

Bootstrap for Coefficients

Model	B	Bootstrap ^a				
		Bias	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
1 (Constant)	1.938	-.029	.489	.002	.803	2.791
F_Brand_favouriteness	.476	.006	.102	.001	.299	.710

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples